A GUIDE TO CONFIDENT LIVING

By

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TO MY CHILDREN

Margaret

John

and

Elizabeth

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INTRODUCTION

OVER a considerable period, the author has had the opportunity to work with large numbers of people facing modern problems in the heart of America's greatest city. He has conducted a consultation service in the Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue, New York, to which hundreds of people every year come for help and guidance The staff consists of ministers, psychiatrists, physicians and social psychiatrists.

The author has evolved a specific technique designed to lead people to personal happiness and success. This method has worked for the many who have put it into practice Its efficiency has been amply demonstrated, it has been tested and found satisfactory by hundreds of people. It has produced amazing results in the personal experience of many. It has indeed proved a guide to confident living.

Yet the principles of happiness and success to be presented in this book are not new. They were not created by the author, but are as old as the Bible. In fact, they are the simple principles taught in the Bible. If the technique possesses any uniqueness, it lies in the effort to show HOW to use these principles in a practical and understanding manner suited to modern men

The book may seem repetitious at times. That is because it is a text-book of a formula It hammers on one basic procedure and repetition is the master of studies, as the classic saying goes. Reiteration is essential in persuading the reader to practise, to try and try again. If water wears away a stone, so does emphasis, even at the danger of repetition, wear away our apathy towards self-betterment.

This book is not theoretical. It contains the detailed description of a technique of living that can lead those who definitely put it into operation to success and happiness. The book is written with one primary purpose. to state and demonstrate a simple, workable technique of thinking and acting that has revitalised the lives of thousands of moderns The important substance in the book is the how-ness. It tells HOW you can achieve your most cherished desires

This book presents in simple outline those formulas which make life work successfully. Each chapter deals with an aspect of the unified theme of the book, namely, HOW . . . to be happy and successful The tested method is applied to some of the basic causes of unhappiness and failure: tension, fear, inferiority, wrong thinking, and other mental handicaps.

Not every factor in successful and happy living is discussed, for that is neither possible nor necessary. The formula is applied to enough factors, however, to teach the reader *how* to use techniques which are applicable to all situations The method is sufficiently developed to show the reader what he wants to know—how to be happy and successful. This book is offered as a guide to confident living

Norman Vincent Peale.

A NEW-OLD WAY TO FREE YOUR POWERS

A YOUNG and highly trained physician sometimes writes an apparently curious prescription for people afflicted with the maladies described in this book fear, inferiority, tension and kindred troubles. His prescription is—"Go to church at least once a Sunday for the next three months"

To the surprised and mystified patient to whom he has given this astonishing prescription, he explains that in a church there are a mood and atmosphere containing healing power that will help cure him of the troubles I have just mentioned. He further asserts that he does not particularly care whether the patient listens to the sermon. Church-going is of value if a person merely sits quietly, yielding himself to the mood and atmosphere of the church. This modern physician reports that amazing benefits have come to his patients as a result of this practice.

A woman, a long-time friend of the doctor's family, was the type of patient who goes from doctor to doctor, never giving heed, never putting into practice the advice received. Finally she came to this doctor, and he told her frankly· "I don't want your case" When she asked him why, he replied "Simply because you will not do what I tell you."

She begged and insisted and promised faithfully she would do as he prescribed, but still he demurred. In a final plea she said "I have the money to pay for your services, and how can you as a doctor refuse my case?"

So he consented on one condition she must do exactly as he prescribed without argument and with full co-operation. He even made her sign a paper to that effect

The reason she was in such a nervous condition was because her sister had married the man whom she wanted to marry and she hated her sister Her entire personality was simmering and the hate-poisons were unsettling her to such an extent that her whole system reacted and she had actual symptoms of sickness The doctor gave her some medicine because he knew that was what she wanted —the first day pink, the second day white pills

Finally one day the doctor wrote the prescription

described above. When she looked at it, amazement overspread her countenance and she snapped "That is the silliest thing I ever heard of I won't do it. What are you anyway, a doctor or a preacher?"

The doctor took out the paper she had signed and said "You must do it or I am through with your case"

Grudgingly she followed directions. Some time elapsed before any benefit was apparent because of the antagonisms in her mind, but presently even she began to yield herself to the healing atmosphere and curative mood present in a service of worship

One day, to her surprise and despite her antipathy, she found herself interested in the sermon She followed it keenly, discovering to her astonishment that it was common sense It appealed to her tremendously. Her interest grew, she became docile to the ministrations of the physician and presently, due to this wise combination of medical practice and religion, resentment went out of her and health came in.

"So you see, my prescription works," said the doctor. In this case he also prescribed religious reading. Gradually the idea of Christianity as a technique and a scientific mechanism designed to overcome the problems to be treated in this book began to dominate her mind To-day this woman has a firm grip on life and is a well person, not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually, for it was in the latter areas of her life that the poison was being generated.

Another doctor has on several occasions sent patients to my church These people are not physically ill, but are so filled with fears, anxieties and tensions, feelings of guilt, inferiority and resentment, that, like the woman described above, they are properly called sick

He sent one man who had not been to church in years, and when the doctor told the man to go to church, the patient resisted, saying. "I detest sermons."

"Go to church, anyway," the doctor said, "and don't listen to the sermon Take cotton-wool along if you wish and put it in your ears when the sermon begins. But there is one thing I want you to do In that church every Sunday morning and evening they have a period of quietness, which they call 'the period of creative silence'. The minister will suggest that you yield yourself to this quietness and open your mind to the recreative power of God,

which has the power to permeate the soul, bringing benign and healing influence. The minister will be entirely correct in saying that, and it will be a medicine far better than anything I can give you. It is the only way I know out of your difficulties. Therefore that is the medicine which I prescribe for your condition."

This man followed directions and the doctor reports that now he, too, is listening to the sermon. In fact, he finds himself intensely interested in the church. He never dreamed it would make such an appeal to him. A definite change for the better is beginning to come over him.

"By giving these patients the advice to go to church, I am utilising a technique that works in many maladies. I have learned that in treating a human being we must consider the whole man and deal with him as something other than a mechanism or organism, for man is more than a bundle of chemical reactions. I believe," said the doctor, "that faith plus science properly correlated can do tremendous good."

An explanation of the phenomena described by this physician lies in the effectiveness of group therapy. Psychiatrists and psychologists not only utilise consultation and psychological treatment in working privately with individuals, but in certain circumstances they also make use of group treatment for several patients at one time. In such circumstances the counsellor is working with people who have a common background in personal counselling. They are therefore familiar with the usual procedures and know how to co-operate fully.

In the instance of a service of public worship, the minister who during the week is a private counsellor, attempts to bring to bear upon the members of a large congregation similar techniques for applying spiritual power, except that now he uses group therapy. His congregation is composed of many types. Some are present because they realise their need of help. Others need help, but are not conscious of it. Still others are present merely out of habit. Others may be present because they unconsciously seek some satisfying answer to the vague dissatisfactions of their minds.

In a large congregation, while there is a wide diversification of interest, it is also true that there are only a few basic human problems. It must also be taken into consideration that people are people regardless of who they are or what

their backgrounds may be. There are certain deep universal appeals to human interest, and to these human nature always responds. There is no force equal to religion in its power to touch and to satisfy basic needs. For this reason the personal religious counsellor and the religious practitioner of group therapy have an opportunity enjoyed by no other scientist in the field to reach to the depths of human nature and thus bring healing strength, peace and power

May I outline my own practice? The above-mentioned theories began to develop in my mind some years ago as the number of persons with whom I was privately counselling increased I came to the ministry of a Fifth Avenue church at the low point of the depression, back in 1932. New York City, as the financial centre of the nation, was profoundly affected by the depression, and I soon became aware of the fear, anxiety, insecurity, disappointment, frustration and failure everywhere at hand I began to preach on these themes and stressed how faith in God could give courage and wisdom together with new insights for the solution of problems Advertising such topics in the Press brought large congregations to hear these discussions Soon my schedule of personal interviews was more than I could possibly handle and long waiting lists developed. Recognising my lack of specialised knowledge, I turned to a highly competent psychiatrist, Dr. Smiley Blanton, for help, and thus began the counselling clinic in the church.

Soon I began to notice in the congregation scores of people with whom I had counselled personally. It was then that the thought came of carrying over from the interview room to a big congregation the same technique of spiritual treatment we were utilising in personal consultation.

One technique used in the service of public worship which has produced amazing results is the period of directed quietness Attendance at Quaker meetings had taught me the value of creative silence In meeting with the Friends, I derived great personal benefit, such as lowering of tension, strength over fear and mental clarification, which helped me in one or two instances to the most astounding solution of problems. The Friends, of course, have the advantage of long years of training in the tradition of silent meditation. We in the churches generally have never developed expertness in utilising quietness in worship Protestants as a rule do not practise complete quietness but inevitably have a

background of music. I began to interject complete silence, but did it gradually and only occasionally; it proved so effective that now if I omit it for one service many people are sure to protest.

The technique which we employ was described in a pamphlet issued by the Marble Collegiate Church Sermon Publication Committee

> Picture the church filled to overflowing by a great congregation numbering more than 2,000 people. The sunlight is streaming in the great windows, illuminating the sanctuary and falling softly upon the worshipping multitude. The church interior is a combination of gold and soft reds, with red brocade cushions and back rests in the mahogany-and-white colonial pews. Around three sides the great balcony swings
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> The front of the church is not in the form of an altar, but a small platform on which are placed three large, stately chairs, against a backdrop of rich red velvet At the left of the platform is a beautiful lecturn on which rests the great pulpit Bible Towering above and behind the backdrop is a great nave which carries out the gold decoration. Here sits the choir. Dr. Peale is seated in the large centre chair, his associates on either side.
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> Following the reading of the Scripture a deep hush settles upon the congregation. Dr. Peale arises, steps to the front of the platform and with nothing between himself and the congregation he speaks somewhat as follows "We have come here this morning because God is in this place and we want to make contact with Him This greatest of all experiences possible to human beings is best accomplished through silence. It is possible for every person in this church now to establish such a close contact with God that he shall be recreated Remember the words of the Scriptures, 'In Him we live, and move, and have our being, As long as we are 'in Him' we are in the flow of God's power and strength. Peace and power are ours But sadly we become detached from this flow We do not live 'in Him', and thus accumulate fear, anxiety, negative thinking—everything that causes failure. Let us, therefore, practise now a moment of absolute silence. I suggest that you allow your body to assume a relaxed position in order that tension may go out of you. Perhaps you may wish to close your eyes to shut out the

world. In this moment of silence the one thing you must not do is to think about yourself or any of your problems. Instead, think about God for one minute and conceive of Him as now recreating you. Let us retire into a vital and vibrant period of creative meditation."

So saying, a deep silence falls upon the congregation. If there has been any coughing up to this point, it ceases. The only sound you can hear is the swish of automobile tyres on the Avenue outside and even that seems far away

It is not a dead silence, for there is aliveness and vibrancy in the air. There is always the spirit of expectancy that something great is about to happen Sometimes this silence lasts for only sixty seconds. Sometimes longer, but people become lost in the silence. It is as if God, Himself, touches their minds with peace

Presently, in a very quiet voice, Dr. Peale breaks the silence by saying "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And he also adds "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee" He stresses this latter verse, emphasising that for the period of quietness the minds of the worshippers have been fixed not upon their troubles, but upon God And because of that firm fixing of their minds upon the Eternal, God has sent His peace to them in that period of silence

Scores of people report that the most amazing benefits have occurred to them in this quiet period. Strangely enough, it is not, as you might expect, women who seem to appreciate this period of quietness, but the hard-pressed business man of to-day expresses himself enthusiastically as to the benefits he receives. Perhaps this in part at least accounts for the fact that the congregations in the Marble Collegiate Church are more than fifty per cent men.

I am convinced that in the vibrant and healing silence which falls over a great congregation when the suggestion is emphasised and accepted that God is present and that Jesus Christ walks the aisles to touch human beings, actual power is being released

We know that the universe is filled with power, that the very air is charged with it Only a short time ago we discovered atomic energy Other forms of energy which shall subsequently be developed may be even greater. Cannot

we, then, assume that in this dynamic universe there are spiritual forces all about us ready to play upon us and to recreate us? The New Testament definitely assures us that spiritual power is a fact. Christianity is more than a promise of power. It is power itself. The New Testament declares: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power." Again it states: "Ye shall receive power, after the Holy Spirit is come upon you." All of which means that when an individual conditions his mind to the illimitable spirit of power which fills the universe, it shall fill him also.

The New Testament tells us that Christianity is life, not a way of life, but life itself. It is the essence of life. It is vitality and vibrant energy. Christianity is, therefore, more than a creed or an idea. It is a throbbing, pulsating, vibrant, creative energy, even in such manner as the sunlight is energy, only infinitely more so. It is a deep therapy which can drive to the heart of a personality or of society (which is an amalgamation of individual personalities) in breaking down infection centres, building up life centres, transforming, endowing with new energy—in a word, recreating. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." "In Him," that is in Christ, is life (vitality). "In Him" is creative energy, and this creative energy is the tremendous dynamic power of life itself.

We do not half realise the tremendous power with which we may make contact when in church. But when we drive deeply into Christianity, as in a service of worship such as that described, and gradually yield to the atmosphere, we become relaxed in body, mind and spirit. The hymns, the choral music, the reading from the Bible, the quiet, unhurried mood, all conspire to conditioning the mind for the period of silence. When by a conscious act of will one turns his mind to God, fixing his thought upon the divine source of power and energy; then in such manner as if he had turned a switch and electrical contact had been made, spiritual power begins to pass into him.

I call attention to a network of wires which draw electrical energy out of the universe. This power illuminates the church. It operates the pipe organ. It controls the heating unit. By means of thermostatic control of this power, the heat-flow comes and goes as needed. Electrical energy operates the loud-speaker system to carry the service to overflow auditoriums in the same building. The entire structure is a network of wires which constitute in themselves

the medium over which power flows. Isn't it a reasonable assumption that such a building, where many minds are unified in concentration on the same objective, is also a great reception centre of power far greater than electricity? Two thousand mental and spiritual antennæ draw spiritual power to this congregation and this power enters the minds, bodies and souls of those who have become attuned to this mystic yet real force.

Another central factor of Christianity employed in spiritual therapy is the thought of light. It is interesting to observe the frequent references to light in the New Testament. It is usually related to new life. Men have discovered recently the extraordinary healing properties of light. Touch a wire containing two hundred volts and get a shock. Touch a wire over which is passing twenty-five thousand volts and you will be electrocuted, but make contact with one million volts and instead of destroying you, the contact will build up your body-cells Under the infra-red lamp in two minutes you can derive perhaps as much therapeutic benefit as by exposing yourself for one hour to direct sunlight, since the dust in the atmosphere weakens the value of the sunlight Thus light is used in healing

Judged by its healing effect, Christianity possesses the same quality. The Bible tells us that in Jesus Christ is life and this life is the "light" of men, which can heal and transform them so that they themselves are filled with new and recreated life

In applying group therapy in services of public worship many individuals are exposed to creative light energy in a spiritual sense I want always to be on the side of common sense and factual realities. A crank is abhorrent to me I believe always in being truly and completely scientific and rational in religious faith and practice This does not mean, however, that one must be bound by materialistic science Christianity, as will repeatedly be pointed out in this book, is itself a science. I positively believe, therefore, that if a man will go to church and attune himself to the mood and atmosphere, and if for only one minute of silence he will turn from the negative and destructive thoughts that agitate his mind and, if truly relaxed in body and in soul, he will affirm faith in God, he thereby opens himself to the recreative power that flows constantly through the universe

After such a service, I received a letter from a very rational and intelligent woman·

I want to tell you how much your services mean to me. It is an inspiration to attend a service in the Marble Church and I feel that it is to those services that I owe the fact that I am well now.

For five years I have had attacks of insomnia and a nervous breakdown. Last autumn I returned to my position after being ill all summer. In desperation, I thought I would try to work again

After six weeks of every day being a misery, and after three times offering to resign, I went to a service in the Marble Church. You had the silent prayer before which you told the congregation how to pray and how to cast out all worry and how to let the mind receive the power of God to take over worries The sermon was along the same line.

I went out of church feeling much better. I prayed often for help and guidance, and on Wednesday of the following week I suddenly realised that I felt all right and I have been so ever since. I began to enjoy my work. After a few weeks I began to sleep without taking any medicine At your church service I found the clue for curing myself by your showing me how to let God help me.

This woman came to church a defeated, baffled, disorganised person Apparently she was of that mental and spiritual quality which enabled her to become sufficiently childlike and naive to follow with faith the suggested procedures The tremendous power of faith came to the forefront of her mind, and faith is the contact point with God's power. As she sat in church relaxed, yielding and believing, the healing light of God began to encompass her It proceeded into her life by its deep therapy. It took away the sense of strain Her nerves relaxed It penetrated into her mind, deep into her tortured and tormented being. It reached the spot from which her trouble was coming. It spread throughout her mind a healing radiance and she was changed.

A friend gave me an excellent definition of a competent church service "The creation of an atmosphere in which a spiritual miracle can take place" Tremendous things happen to the personality in such circumstances when the mood is auspicious

I heard a charming young woman say that she was sitting rather indolently in the congregation when the preacher

shot out these words. "God has the power to take an ordinary person and make him extraordinary if that person will yield himself completely to the power of God."

This struck her with great force, so much so, that it revolutionised her thinking. A change began to take place in a personality hitherto ineffective and she became one of the most amazing persons I have ever known. She developed unusual charm, superior leadership abilities and such an infectious spiritual life that scores of people have been changed by contact with her. With all of this, she is a person of rare personal qualities, having all the gifts and graces of a modern woman. In any group she is "the life of the party."

A man wrote me following a service of worship. His trouble was mental confusion. He was in New York for a conference which involved the future of a business. A heavy investment was involved in the negotiations. All day Thursday, Friday and Saturday he and his associates struggled for an answer, but without results. This man was wise enough to understand that a sustained tension of mind, instead of producing clarification, tends towards continued bafflement. You have to break the tension of thought sometimes and relax your mind to get an idea through. So that Sunday he came to church and heard the minister suggest that all problems be dropped from the mind for one minute and that everyone turn his thoughts to God. This business man had never previously heard this procedure advocated, but the logic of it appealed to him, and he followed precisely the directions given. He was an expert in his business and he had come to church on the assumption that the church provides expert spiritual treatment, so he followed directions expecting results and he got results.

He states that all of a sudden, like a spotlight moving across a dark theatre to light upon some particular object on the stage, itself blacked out, the answer to his problem stood out in his mind distinct and completely formulated. Unquestionably the sustained thought which he had given to his problem throughout the previous days had been formulating an answer in his mind, but the releasing of the answer was acomplished by relaxing his mind through spiritual therapy.

Take another man, one prominent in the financial life of New York. He asked me to visit his firm in the Wall Street district, where I found a very prosperous and important business being carried on under his direction. After

showing me his interesting offices and describing his outstanding work, he made this surprising statement. "Most of the people who work for me are making more money for themselves, and this business has attained new heights, all because of something that happened to me in your church"

He had come to church one Sunday morning and had fully entered into the spirit of the service. His mind, which is very active and alert, became attuned. Of a sudden into his mind flashed an idea. It was a complete outline of profit-sharing that would allow certain people to go far beyond their existing salaries. He immediately put this plan into operation, with the result that not only does each person participating in the plan make more money, but the firm has gone away ahead of any previous records The best place on earth to get a new and workable idea for your business is in the type of church service described in this chapter.

Such amazing power can thus be generated that we hear often of people's lives being completely changed, sometimes instantly, in church services Undoubtedly the reader has read stories of dramatic conversions which have been validated in the subsequent life of the individual for long years, even to the day they die The explanation of these phenomena is that these persons made contact with a power developed through mood and atmosphere and faith, that at the proper conjuncture affected the individual so tremendously that previous habits were broken, the individual becoming as the New Testament graphically says: "A new creature old things are passed away, behold, all things become new."

The congregation of my own church over a period of several years has been trained in this technique. However, this congregation is composed at every service of hundreds of visitors, many of whom find this procedure entirely new. They, too, report that when they yield themselves in full co-operation to the spiritual force to which appeal is being made, amazing results are obtained.

Not long ago I attempted to apply this therapy to a large congregation in a Southern city before which I had never spoken. The members of this congregation were totally unacquainted with this form of Christian procedure. I was preaching on the text. "Hear, and your soul shall live." I stated that "to hear" means more than merely to listen with the outer ear. The word has a deep content, implying the

complete enthralment of the mind to the presence of God. I pointed out that it means to hear not alone with the ear but also with the very essence of the mind I explained that "to hear" means to believe that something is being said that has the power to drive to the centre of your nature and release you from any crippling thing which may dwarf or frustrate your personality.

I asked the members of this large congregation to conceive of God's power as flowing through the church and playing down upon them. I urged each person during one minute of silence to turn from every problem in his mind and to listen intently not to me, the speaker, but to Jesus Christ and to practise "hearing" His words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest".

I ceased speaking and stood still while a death-like hush fell upon the vast assemblage Afterwards a man came to me and stated that he had attended church for years, but that even so his mind continued to be filled with fears and worries and that since boyhood he had suffered from a lack of confidence in himself "All my life," he said, "I have been inwardly and emotionally bound up, and though I have become fairly successful, it has been despite myself rather than because of it I have suffered inner conflict all my life but," he asserted as he looked at me with an expression of incredulity on his face, "during that moment when you asked the people to really listen, I became completely lost and enthralled. When it was over I came to, but in the moment that I was lost, I found myself. I feel as if some power has rushed through me, carrying out with it that which has troubled me for years I believe that at last I am free"

What had happened to him was simply that he had made contact with a force so great that it permeated the controlling areas of the mind and made him over This power, namely, God, created him in the first place, and that power is always present to keep recreating us if the contact is not broken but is firmly maintained. When it *is* broken, fears and defeats surge in to dominate the personality, if the contact is re-established, these destructive elements are flushed out and the person again begins to live. In this case the operation seemed to be instantaneous, as it often is Sometimes it requires cultivation over a period, but always it marks the recreation of the individual.

We shall proceed to outline a simple but workable technique for successful living. As stated in the Introduction, nothing is offered here on a theoretical basis. Every principle in this book has been worked out in verifiable laboratory tests. These principles will work when they are worked. Confidence in these teachings is based on the fact that they have been developed out of the lives of real people, not once but many times. They have the effect of law because they have been proven by repeated demonstration. Let me drive home this fact: *If you will utilise the principles of faith stated in this book, you, too, can solve the difficult problems of your personality. You, too, can really learn to live.* It is not important what church you attend—Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish—nor does it make any difference how much you have failed in the past or how unhappy your present state of mind. Regardless of how apparently hopeless your condition may be, if you will believe in the principles outlined in this book and seriously start to work with them, you will get positive results.

I urge you to consider carefully the amazing things that often happen in church and suggest that you submit yourself not only to the private therapy of faith, but to the astounding effect that group therapy may have upon you.

But to attend church successfully, skill is required. Worship is not a hit-or-miss affair. There is an art to it. Those who by study and practice become expert in church-going master one of the greatest of all skills, that of spiritual power. That you may learn to go to church efficiently, I suggest the following ten rules to guide you in mastering the art of church-going. Consistently put these rules into practice, and one of these days the great thing may happen to you.

1. Think of church-going as an art, with definite rules to follow, an art you can acquire.
2. Go regularly to church. A prescription designed by a physician to be taken at regular intervals is not effective if taken once a year.
3. Spend a quiet Saturday evening and get a good sleep. Get in condition for Sunday.
4. Go in a relaxed state of body and mind. Don't rush to church. Go in a leisurely manner. The absence of tension is a requisite to successful worship.
5. Go in a spirit of enjoyment. Church is not a place of gloom. Christianity is a radiant and happy thing. Religion should be enjoyed.

6. Sit relaxed in the pew, feet on floor, hands loosely in lap or at the side. Allow the body to yield to the contour of the pew. Don't sit rigid. God's power cannot get through to your personality through a tied-up body and mind.
7. Don't bring a "problem" to church. Think hard during the week, but let the problem "simmer" in the mind over Sunday. God's peace brings creative energy to help the intellectual process. You will receive insight to solve your problem.
8. Do not bring ill will to church. A grudge blocks the flow of spiritual power. To cast out ill will, pray in church for those you do not like or who dislike you.
9. Practise the art of spiritual contemplation. In church do not think about yourself. Think about God. Think of some beautiful and peaceful thing, perhaps even of the stream where you fished last summer. The idea is to get mentally away from the world, into an atmosphere of peace and refreshment.
10. Go to church expecting some great thing to happen to you. Believe that a church service is the creation of an atmosphere in which a spiritual miracle can take place. Men's lives have been changed in church through faith in Christ. Believe it can happen to you

I could summon scores of people to testify to the great things that happen in church to change people's lives. However, one stands out unforgettably in my mind. Early one Monday morning I received a telephone call from a gentleman who asked if I had received the card mailed to the church the night before. We have in our pews simply worded cards upon which an individual may register his desire to begin practising the spiritual life.

This man stated that he had signed a card the night before, and urged me to come to see him at once. He was so insistent and it apparently meant so much to him that I left my office and went to see him. I found that he was the controller of a large business organisation. He was surrounded by all the accoutrements of an important man and occupied a spacious office. He was a quiet, dignified man, one of the most impressive personalities I have ever known.

"Something has happened which has changed everything, and I simply had to talk to you about it at once, because it happened in your church last night."

He then launched into the story of his experience, talking in a quiet manner, though intense excitement was evident beneath the surface of his calmness "I am not a churchman," he asserted. "In fact, rarely have I gone to church over the past twenty years. I have been too busy, or at least I thought I was. For some few years now I have had the feeling that something is lacking, yet I seemed to have everything—money, position, friends, influence and power, but you know how it is, how sometimes your food just doesn't taste right. Well, life did not taste right to me. The flavour was not as fine as when I was younger. I have lived a fairly decent life and there is nothing dramatic in what happened to me in the way of turning from sin, for I really have no sins of a very serious nature. It was just that my life doesn't thrill me any more—that is, until last night.". Then he began to recite the same old story of tension, fear, irritability, antagonism, as characteristic of his daily trouble. These things he apparently did not consider as sins, but they were the root cause of the dissatisfaction with which he had been afflicted.

"At any rate," he continued, "I happened to be walking down Fifth Avenue last night and passed your church. The topic on the bulletin board attracted me and I decided to go in I came in late, and the only seat I could find was in the rear of the balcony. The first thing that surprised me was that the church was filled. I did not think that people went to church any more, especially on Sunday night, but then, you see, it has been a long time, and I know very little about churches.

"I found myself yielding to the mood and atmosphere of the place It was homey and friendly. A feeling of satisfaction began to come over me and I really had a peaceful feeling too In your sermon you were driving home the point that if anybody in that great congregation had anything bothering them, they could have the matter settled if they would turn their minds to God I imagine that is a crude way of expressing what you said, but that is the idea I got. You were very positive in your assertion and illustrated your sermon by the stories of people who had done that and to whom something great had happened. I was intensely interested in those stories, and suddenly I became aware that what had happened to those people was what I wanted to have happen to me. You then stated that there was a card in the pew upon which one could register his desire to have this happen

"I took that card in my hand, but could not bring myself to sign it But I put it in my pocket and went back to my hotel, went to bed and to sleep In the middle of the night I was suddenly wide awake. It was shortly after three a.m I struggled to go to sleep, but a strange excitement seemed to possess me, and I arose and sat in my chair The memory of the church service came back and suddenly I thought of the card. I laid it on my desk and re-read it As I did so I knew that I must sign that card. I found myself praying. I signed the card.

"Then I felt that I must mail it at once to you, so I put on my bath-robe and walked down the hall to the mail chute and stood there holding the card For a moment I hesitated It was so strange that I, Bill ——, should be doing such a thing Had I suddenly become emotional! Had I grown old? Was I turning to religion in my old age, but fifty-six isn't old, is it?

"Then I opened my fingers and dropped the card For just a second I could see it flash down the mail chute and then it was gone"

He turned a very intense gaze upon me "The minute I dropped that card, something happened to me. I became inexpressibly happy.' Saying this he dropped his head on the desk and to my surprise began to sob I am always embarrassed to hear a man cry, and I simply sat still and let him sob Finally he raised his head and without even apologising said. "It seems that my whole life all of a sudden is broken up and I am so happy that I wanted you to come over here at once so that I could tell you about it From this time on I know the answer to all my problems I have found peace and happiness"

This gentleman lived for three years after this time, but always I shall remember him as one of the greatest personalities I ever knew. He went to church, and something great happened to him which changed everything for him

And this same thing happens in churches everywhere every Sunday, or for that matter whenever a church service is held Put yourself in the way of it—it can happen to you

And now—an important reminder—fix this thought firmly in your mind until it dominates your consciousness: *You do not need to be defeated by anything.* Your life can be a great experience The methods and techniques suggested in this book will work *if you work them*

CHAPTER TWO

DON'T KEEP YOUR TROUBLES TO YOURSELF

At a railway station bookstall my attention was drawn to an extensive display of magazines and books dealing with the common problems of living.

"I notice you have a great deal of this literature for sale," I commented to the sales-girl.

"Yeah," she slangily replied, "and I'm tellin' you that kind of stuff sure does sell"

"More than murder mysteries or movie magazines?" I inquired

"Yeah, more than all of those, and they even out-top the love stories Believe me," she declared, "this self-improvement or self-help literature is what we count on to pay the profits of this business"

"What is the reason?" I asked

"The answer's easy," she replied "The poor things (referring to her customers) are all tangled up. There are so many things they want to get away from, mostly themselves, I suppose" Then she paused "I guess they're looking for someone to release them from all their troubles"

One learns not to be surprised at wisdom from unexpected sources. An observant sales-girl daily serving the public may develop shrewd insights into the ways of human nature and the needs of human beings

As I walked away, her wise words rang in my ears "The poor things are all tangled up They are looking for someone to release them from all their troubles"

Of course, it is a very large order, but somebody has to perform this function of release for modern people To meet the situation, a whole new profession has developed, that of personal counselling It is not in the strict sense new, for there have always been men who have dealt with personal problems However, it is only within recent years that it has become a specialised undertaking Human beings of late seem to have developed higher tension, greater nervousness, deeper fears, profounder anxieties and more severe neuroses and complexes It is one of the marked characteristics of our time. Some antidote being positively

required, the personal counselling service has been developed. It is performed largely by psychiatrists, psychologists, clergymen, social workers, and of course physicians.

It must be borne in mind that the beneficiaries of this new profession are not people of distorted mental life or pathological persons. The profession's primary function is to keep normal people normal. Counselling is basically preventive rather than curative, but it is also curative It deals with the common fears, anxieties, hates and guilt reactions of everyday people Modern man is beginning to realise that primarily it is in his thoughts that his happiness and efficiency are determined; he is learning that the condition of his emotional health indicates whether or not he shall have peace, serenity and strength. And mental, emotional and spiritual health are essential to success in living.

Experts in personal efficiency know that to be successful in business, or in any kind of work, it is necessary to be a well-integrated, well-organised personality Men fail not alone because of laziness or lack of ability, but there are deeper causes of failure in the mental attitudes and emotional reactions. In most instances the average person does not understand these reactions and their fundamental influence upon all his actions The trained counsellor helps a person to know himself, to understand why he does what he does He teaches a person to analyse his motives, his objectives and his reactions If it is a good practice to go to your dentist, or to your physician periodically, it is equally wise to go to your spiritual adviser for regular check-ups. When you begin to feel troubled and your personality seems to be disorganised, go to your counsellor and frankly tell him what is troubling you. He may be able to release you from these unhappy factors which make you one of that vast number whom the sales-girl characterised as "poor things, they are all tangled up".

Through an example, I can make plain the scientific attitude that underlies religious counselling. A man, who was a victim of nerves came for an interview His mind was in such a panic that he could no longer do his work He occupied an important position, but had completely lost his grip He was not suffering from a nervous breakdown, but was moving rapidly towards that condition. His doctor told him frankly that he had no medicine for him except sedatives He recommended that he see a psychiatrist, but as the

patient was leaving the office, the doctor reconsidered. "Maybe you had better see a minister," he advised. The thought had just flashed across the physician's mind that perhaps this man's trouble was in the sphere where the minister practises.

"In a certain sense," said the physician, "ministers are also doctors. That is to say, they are physicians of the soul, and it is often the troubles of the soul that make us sick in mind and spirit and sometimes in the body as well."

The patient came to see me He was not a member of my church, nor had I ever met him Indeed, I knew nothing about him whatsoever. After a brief discussion, it became obvious that he needed to make a confession, which I encouraged him to do. After he had cleansed his thoughts completely—and he had plenty in his mind to make him sick—I asked "Why didn't you see your own minister about this?"

"Oh," he said, with a shocked expression, "I know him too well."

"What do you mean, you know him too well?" I asked.

"Why," he said, "you see, he is a close friend of mine Our families often have dinner together. His children know my children, and why," he added rather lamely, "he is my pastor. He would be shocked to hear these things"

"You always try to put your best foot forward with your pastor, is that it?"

"Why, certainly," he replied, "that is what everyone does with his minister. You just don't want your minister to know anything bad about you"

"You are not very friendly with your doctor, I take it."

"Why, of course; the doctor is as good a friend of mine as the minister"

"Has your doctor ever operated on you?" I asked

"Oh, yes, twice"

"Then your doctor knows you inside and out There is nothing about you that is hidden from him, is there? But you are not embarrassed before him, are you, when you go out to dinner? You do not think as you watch the doctor across the table that he is sitting there saying gleefully 'Ah, I have seen that fellow's insides I know just what they look like' Of course, the doctor has no time to keep your insides in his mind. It is a professional matter with him He sees you as a patient, and in such interviews he is largely the scientist, though, of course, he has a personal interest in you.

When he is with you socially, he thinks of you only as a friend not as a patient. He has a right, in the periods of social and friendly intercourse, to be relieved of his professional duties which require him to think of people's ills and their insides.

"So," I continued, "surely you do not think that when the minister goes out to dinner with you, he is sitting across the table saying. 'Ah, I remember what he told me about himself. I know something he did. I know all about his moral and spiritual insides' What is true of the doctor is also true of the minister He, too, wants to enjoy friendly relationships when he is socially engaged. He sees so much of the pain, trouble, and evil of life that when he finishes with his interviews he wants relief from all of it, therefore, he has trained himself to cast them out of his mind.

"Remember that the minister is also a professional man When he is dealing with a human being in the relation of pastor and parishioner, he is applying all his spiritual, psychological and scientific knowledge He is entirely objective, viewing the person whom he is interviewing as a patient to whom he must apply a cure. When later he meets that same person socially, the chances are that what he was told in the interview never enters his mind. I know from experience that people have come to me six months or a year after I first interviewed them, and I could not for the life of me remember a single detail of their story.

"That is only natural," I pointed out, "because I see a great many people and could not possibly burden my mind with all the details of everything that everybody tells me. I would have a nervous breakdown if I tried that. The minister who counsels with people cannot in the very nature of the case keep such matters in his mind."

Personally I do not even keep a "case history" No written records are made The interview is completely confidential If a person returns for counselling and previously related facts are not recalled, it is necessary for the individual to retell the story to freshen my mind regarding the problem.

There is also in the relation of the minister with his parishioners the background idea of the father and his children The Catholic Church emphasises that the priest is the spiritual father and the Church the great mother of mankind. The priest as father represents the mother Church which exercises care over her spiritual children. Protestants have never held this concept, but that which is told to a

minister is kept, of course, in complete and sacred confidence. There will never be even the slightest breaking of any confidence reposed in him as a pastor. The minister also acts for God in his sacred capacity as spiritual shepherd of the congregation.

It is important to think of the minister as a scientific person to whom one can talk as freely and as confidentially as with a doctor His true position in the community can be called that of a scientist of the spiritual life, especially trained for his particular function. He has as much right to "hang out his shingle" as any other scientifically trained man, not for the practice of medicine, for never would he infringe upon the function of the medical healer, but for practice in his own sphere, he should be looked upon in the community as a skilled, well-trained scientific man—a shepherd of human souls, a physician of personality

A prominent physician, Dr. James H. Means of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and Professor of Clinical Medicine at Harvard University, said "The patient, when he is sick should send for his minister as quickly as he sends for his doctor" Therefore, do not think of the minister merely socially. Do not over-emphasise the sacred or pious character of his calling. Do not be embarrassed to tell him frankly everything. He has heard of, and probably has dealt with, every problem and every sin that you may mention. There is nothing you have ever done or can do that has not at some previous time come before him as a human problem He does not become shocked nor does he lose his regard and respect for you, for he has a deep and philosophical understanding of human nature Despite whatever evil you may confess to him. he is trained to see the good in you and help you bring it into dominance. He will give you understanding kindliness and will aid you with all the skill at his command.

Many people to-day are learning to think of a minister in this manner, and the results of this newly established relation are encouraging, even amazing The consultation service has become an integral part of the Protestant ministry. Psychological and psychiatric knowledge is being widely employed. Ministers, of course, do not infringe upon the prerogative of the duly accredited psychologist or psychiatrist, and are exceedingly careful never to go beyond their own knowledge. Ministers are, however, setting apart office hours when members of their church or anyone in the

community, for that matter, may come to consult them. Ministers, moreover, are discussing simple, basic human problems in their sermons, with the result that people are becoming increasingly aware that these pastors are truly what their titles indicate: men who understand human beings and who know how to relieve them of their troubles, thus making it possible for them to live effective lives.

Many young ministers nowadays are taking courses with psychiatrists, psychologists and physicians, not that they expect to have medical degrees, for few ministers would desire that, but in order to better understand why people do what they do. Obviously the solution of many problems goes deeper than medication or surgery. Perhaps these pastors are better qualified than those of previous generations to exercise the gifts bestowed by the Great Physician, for their scientific knowledge of faith as a therapeutic is probably more extensive.

In some instances ministers have organised a staff in their churches upon which outstanding medical men, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers are glad to serve on a clinical basis, or in an advisory capacity.*

In view of this service readily available to modern men and women, it is possible for any person to secure relief and release from the troubles weighing on his mind. So don't keep your troubles to yourself. See a counsellor qualified to help you. Go to your minister as you would to a doctor.

I realise that this advice runs counter to a rather common but false heroism. People say "I always keep my troubles to myself." This is usually said with the assumption that such an attitude will be commended. Being close-mouthed about trouble is frequently considered very long-suffering and strong. In certain circumstances it is commendable and in still other circumstances it is heroic, even inspiring. All of us have known people who have been compelled to suffer pain for years, and who have done so with a glorious spirit, never even allowing pain to show upon their faces. They have not distressed their loved ones and their friends by constant reference to their suffering.

* In the Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue, New York City, of which the author is the minister, the eminent psychiatrist, Dr Smiley Blanton, conducts a clinic in which he is assisted by three other psychiatrists, a psychologist, and a social psychiatrist. It is one of the pioneer religio-psychiatric clinics in American churches.

On the other hand, some people seem to develop into whiners and complainers. They are victims of self-pity, thinking constantly about themselves They do not keep their troubles to themselves, and they should learn to do so. They want everybody else to keep their troubles for them, and people do not like to be the repositories of other people's troubles Ella Wheeler Wilcox well says·

"Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone."

But the policy of keeping your troubles to yourself can be dangerous There is a sense in which the human personality must have release from itself. A person cannot for ever bottle up within himself the guilt, the problems and the adversity which have affected him To use a crude phrase, it is advisable to get some things "off your chest". Perhaps the word "chest" in this common saying is wisely used because it would seem to have reference to the heart. The heart has been traditionally considered the centre of emotional life

In more classic phraseology, Shakespeare gives the same advice "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased, pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow, raze out the written troubles of the brain, and with some sweet oblivious antidote cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart?"

Inner release is a necessity faced by every human being. The heart must be relieved. It is a dangerous policy to carry things too long, else they turn inward upon you. So don't keep you troubles to yourself. Get them straightened out by someone who knows the art and is skilled in counselling. People who do follow this suggested procedure, who turn to their minister, their rabbi, or priest, or psychiatrist or psychologist, or other well-qualified counsellor, or even to some wise and understanding friend, receive profound benefit. Often they receive complete relief from their troubles.

The counsellor draws up and out of the mind the ideas and thoughts which have been causing trouble and admits new and healing thoughts. It is impossible to drive out a thought just by being willing to do so. If by force of will it is ejected momentarily, it comes rushing back into the mind when the pressure is removed or when the guard is down The only successful and permanent method is to

supplant destructive thoughts with good ones, diseased thoughts with healthy ones. To accomplish this the counsellor employs specific technique.

In our interview-room a man piteously described his condition. He happened to be a banker in a small city, an influential man in his community. He was a man of unquestioned character and was held in high respect.

"I simply do not understand it," he said. "I live a decent life and try to help people in many ways, but I am unhappy. In fact," he concluded, "I am miserable."

Investigation revealed an inner state of conflict. He was filled with fears and anxieties and there was not a little hate and resentment in his mind. It seemed when we started him talking that there were more people than even he imagined in his town who irritated him and whom he detested. He had a strong desire to get even, but his stern religious training had helped to sublimate much of this antagonism. However, he had not cast it out. He had merely forced it inward, where it was creating pressure as steam will when bottled up.

He poured all of this out hesitantly at first, but in a torrential flood as he finally let go of himself and the restraints of embarrassment and self-consciousness were eased.

I listened patiently. The important thing was not what I should advise, but that he should tell everything. In other words, he must get it all out. A complete mental catharsis was required.

How should I advise him? To pray! Yes, but he had been doing that all his life. To read the Bible! Of course, but daily he had made it a practice to read the Bible. Perfunctory religious words would not suffice. Plainly it was necessary to attack his situation in a simple and yet fresh and original manner. It is my belief that the Christian religion has not been made simple enough, even for educated men of his type. We should learn that the really effective way to make religion a useful tool is to cast it in simple thought-forms and work out its techniques in very lucid and simple procedures. It should be made graphic, even picturesque, and a new slant given to lift it out of the dull and lifeless formality which often renders it impotent.

So I said to this man: "Would it not be a fine thing if we could reach down into your mind and take out all those thoughts which have put your brain into such a turmoil and tumult?"

"You have no idea how wonderful that would be," he declared.

Pursuing the idea, I said "Wouldn't it be great if a surgeon could take a knife and cut a hole in the top of your head, then take an instrument and go down in and scrape all those ideas out? He might then take one of those instruments such as a dentist uses to blow air into a cavity and blow it all around inside your head to be sure that no vestige of those diseased ideas lurked there. Then when it was all cleaned out, the physician would close up the top of your head."

Then I reminded him of that wise insight in the Bible which says that even if we got the devils out and cleaned the house, they would come trooping back. Therefore it was obvious that he would have to do more than merely to empty his mind and sweep it clean; otherwise the expelled thoughts would, by reason of their long habitat, return and take up their abode in the house which they had been forced temporarily to vacate.

Continuing this rather curious spiritual treatment, I said: "When your head would be all cleaned out, before the physician should close it up, perhaps I as a minister would also be present and I would open the Bible and pick out of it some of those great verses about faith, forgiveness, kindliness, and drop them down into your mind—just cram your brain full of them. Then let the physician close up the hole in the top of your head and clamp it down. Those new ideas in the form of Bible texts would soak into your mind and permeate it, creating a healing influence so that finally you would be changed completely."

He sadly shook his head, laughing as he did so at the oddity of this therapy, and said. "Isn't it too bad that can't be done? It is just a pity."

We sat quietly considering the matter, then I asked "Why can't it be done?"

"But how?" he demanded. "You can't cut a hole in the top of my head."

"We do not need to do that There are already two entrances into your brain—your eye and your ear Therefore my professional advice to you is to go home, take a New Testament, and underline in red every verse that you think you need and commit them one by one to memory. For a time even give up reading books and magazines and only glance at the paper. Concentrate on filling your mind with

verses from the Bible. Fully occupy your mind with these healing thoughts so as to prevent the destructive thoughts you have so long harboured from continuing to live in your mind. Concentrate on expelling destructive thoughts by the powerful and creative thoughts taken from the Bible. These words from the Scripture are very powerful and will curette the diseased thoughts out of your mind in due course.

"Then," I said, "go to church and really listen to what is said. Listen beneath your conscious self, eagerly reaching out for vital words and sentences and thoughts. Sincerely meditate upon them and conceive of them as dropping deeply into your brain.

"Thus you will have admitted healing thoughts by the two entrances to your brain which are available to you; namely, your eye and your ear. So the actual hole in your head is not necessary. When you feel a hate thought or a defeat thought coming into your mind, immediately turn to these words and ideas which you have assembled. Say them over quickly. Repeat them again and again. Persevere in this practice and you will soon change the character of your thoughts entirely. Flush out your brain and refill it with healing power."

The banker did as directed. Being a man of considerable mental strength, he was able to apply a simple procedure. Only minds great enough to be simple can benefit by a procedure like this one. Please remember that the greatest of all thinkers, Jesus Christ, said that unless you "become as little children"—you cannot get results.

The banker tells me that as a result of this simple procedure, the whole character of his life is changing, but he warns: "When I let up, those old ideas try to sneak back, but I do not let up, and with every passing day I get more and more control. I have found," he concluded, "that by changing my thinking, by putting into my mind the great ideas of my religion, that I can literally force out destructive thoughts. It was a battle at first," he admits, "but the power of faith can overcome any opposition and gradually I am winning the peace of mind which I have sought."

I have found that such simple techniques and procedures often secure extraordinary results. A general contemplation of religion and a formal observance of its forms, while doubtless stimulating and inspiring, are not always sufficient to cure the deep maladies of the soul. The application of

specific remedies in some such simple form as suggested in the foregoing incident is often required to bring full relief.

To the reader who may be surprised by the "curious and unusual" procedure recommended to the banker, the best answer is that it worked It has been my experience, even with the most intellectual and sophisticated persons, that when Christianity is reduced to precise formulas and is applied in simple techniques or devices, it "works" in an amazingly successful manner.

If, as I believe, the minister is a spiritual doctor, he must be in a position to suggest practical spiritual prescriptions

In counselling, two basic human problems seem constantly to recur. One is fear and the other is guilt. Fear is treated elsewhere in this book, so I shall not discuss it here.

Sin, or a sense of guilt, has a peculiarly damaging effect on the personality. It may be best described as a wound. Guilt cuts deeply into the emotional and spiritual nature. At first this personality cut may not cause suffering and one may feel that "he has got away with it". However, if, like the history of some physical diseases, the development is slow, nevertheless the time comes when this guilt malady begins to cause trouble, all of a sudden it may "break out".

Tension increases, nervousness becomes a problem, curious obsessions develop. One man with whom I worked always had to go back to try the door. Another man washed his hands constantly after touching things. Perhaps like Lady Macbeth, he was trying to wash out a spot which did not exist on his hand but which certainly did exist on his mind. Frequently the obsessions are much deeper and result in acute suffering. The mind becomes unsettled, the emotions are thrown out of gear, and one is desperately unhappy and ineffective

One cause of these phenomena is that guilt is an unclean wound. Sorrow, for example, is a clean wound It pains deeply, but, being clean, the wound heals according to the process of nature. A clean wound in the flesh heals without difficulty. A tree hit by lightning gradually heals over its wound, but the effect of guilt or sin is quite another matter. Being unclean, the restorative and curative process cannot be completed. Guilt festers and becomes an infection centre; as in the body, so in the mind and the spirit The personality always and automatically makes the effort to protect itself. Nature strives to isolate an infection centre, but in the case of guilt it cannot be done. In youth, and even in the strong

middle years, its injurious effects may be in part at least halted, but with the declining strength of advancing years and the heavier burden of responsibilities which come with maturity, resistance declines and the long-held infection of guilt rushes out to dominate the entire system.

Sometimes you hear of men breaking down, having heart trouble, too high blood pressure, abnormal tension. A vague, unaccountable dissatisfaction tends to spoil their happiness. Not always, of course, is a sense of guilt the root of such difficulties, but in personal counselling we find that it is the cause, or at least a contributing factor, in a large number of cases.

This particular generation does not seem to like to admit the fact of sin. Some people have gone so far as to say that sin does not exist, but saying so does not make it so. In my opinion one of the profound causes for the nervous tension of this era is that it does not recognize and properly deal with the suppuration of guilt long lodged in human minds. It may also be that the enormous social sins of our time are sapping the mental and emotional health of modern men.

Yes, it is indeed strange and sinister, this sense of guilt. You think it won't make any difference, and so you take it into your system, and presently it begins to throw off what amounts to a "poison", judging by the reaction of the personality. This "poison" gets into your thinking, and soon you say to yourself "I don't seem to be happy. I don't enjoy things any more. I am nervous. Everything has a bad taste. What is the matter with everybody? What is the matter with me?"

Of course, this isn't an actual physical poison, but poison is the best word I can think of to describe the unhealthy and deteriorating secretions that flow from a sense of guilt. It has been well established that nervousness or anger or hate can stimulate secretions in the body and disturb the proper functioning of the physical system. Guilt can affect human beings in a similar fashion. Prominent physicians have proven the theory that hate and resentment cause definite physical trouble and there are many laboratory records available in support of these facts. You simply cannot allow the poison of guilt to remain in your mind and at the same time be happy and efficient.

This was illustrated by the case of an officer in the Air Force who came for an interview. After many missions he was shot down in a raid over some oilfields in Europe. He

suffered battle fatigue and shock He was sent back to a hospital, where he was given the splendid treatment which our Air Force hospitals provided. Still he did not fully recover. Happiness, a grip on life, normal and emotional health eluded him.

Finally the doctor in charge turned him over to the chaplain, and through the chaplain he came to our consultation clinic

In the interviews which followed it came out finally that prior to entering military service, the boy had committed a sex sin. He had attempted to rationalise it on the basis that he was going away and might never see the young lady again. They had planned to be married, but circumstances did not permit it at the time and it was hoped that the marriage might take place after the war. However, passing time made both parties feel that it was not wise to go through with the marriage, and, besides, other persons had entered in to complicate the relationship. The boy explained it to himself by a process of rationalisation, which is obvious and all too common, but it is a fact that you cannot fool your subconscious mind, though you may delude your conscious mind. The mind always tries to save one's face; therefore the conscious mind is not to be trusted in such circumstances. In the subconscious mind, however, the sin is held and seen for what it is. The mind had attempted to bury it, to isolate it, but it began to fester, and finally it was brought out as the cause of the continuing emotional sickness of this young officer.

"Son, your trouble is not in your body," so we told him. "Really it isn't even in your mind. It is in your soul. It is in your moral and spiritual nature." The psychiatrist corroborated the diagnosis

The boy, being a very alert and intellectually objective young man, recognised the validity of the analysis He was willing to submit to spiritual treatment, the essence of which was simply that he get the sin forgiven. As soon as he did this (and his attitude was profoundly sincere), the most remarkable change came over him. He quickly became released, happy, even gay and exuberant He had such a burst of energy and enthusiasm that those who knew him were amazed, and no wonder, for a heavy load resting upon his soul had been lifted. Rapidly he returned to health, and at the present time is very successful in the job he took after being discharged from the service.

It was difficult at first to persuade the boy to tell the counsellor the whole story. This reluctance was not particularly due to a sense of shame, but because he had been led to believe that what we call "sin" no longer has the effect that older generations believed it possessed. His social set had been emphasising for a large part of his developing years that the thing he did was not really wrong. In fact, he attempted to argue with us that it was not wrong, but nineteen hundred years of Christian civilisation had made his subconscious mind know that it is wrong. Therefore his subconscious mind reacted in a manner that was not affected in the slightest by what his particular generation thought about it. Had he followed the beliefs which had been accepted by his conscious mind, he would to-day be one of those who are wrecked by life. The subconscious is not always your enemy. Indeed, it may be your hope, as is proved in this case.

In dealing with guilt, the counsellor often encounters the strange difficulty that while an individual may feel that he has received the forgiveness of God, he is unable to forgive himself. This is largely due to the fact that the mind has become conditioned to the presence of the guilt complex. There is a curious reluctance in the human mind to let go of guilt, no matter how unpleasant. Strange indeed is the mind. It wants freedom and yet hesitates to take freedom when freely offered. It wants to be delivered and yet frequently will not take deliverance when it comes.

I have often noticed that a person who completely confesses guilt and derives the tremendous relief which that confession provides, will presently return and desire to confess the matter all over again and repeatedly.

A man came to see me who confessed a sin and experienced deep relief, but he kept coming back at intervals to confess again the same sin in identical detail. Finally I said to him, "You are having an awfully good time, aren't you?"

"I always feel better after I have confessed this," he replied.

"You may feel better temporarily, but soon your mind begins to take back the guilt. Your mind does not believe that it can be free. It reasons that such deliverance would be too good to be true. Your mind governed by habit is slow to accept the idea that you can be delivered from the domination of the guilt complex. So presently you feel about as badly as you did before you first came to me. But having

experienced the release of confession you return to secure once more a temporary peace of mind."

I pointed out to him that he must learn to forgive himself if he expected to break this recurring circle of defeat. In his mind he must forgive himself and take freedom. Instead of the circle which led him from spiritual imprisonment to release and back again, he must walk straight ahead and away, not back around the circle.

I then told him that he must never confess it again to me or to any other person, but on the contrary he must repeatedly say to himself. "Thank God, I am through with that and I intend to remain through with it."

"So," I said to him, "go ahead and confess it to me once more, but this must be the last time it shall ever be spoken."

When he had finished, I said "Now, that is the last. I will never listen to it again and I strongly urge you never to tell it to another person." I felt sure he would not confess to another because he had a hard enough time telling me the first time I had become a kind of spiritual father to him, a releasing agent, but if he was to be cured, he had to make a transference beyond me to God and to his own mind. He had to accept forgiveness from both God and himself. Repeated confession indicated he had not really surrendered his guilt

It was several months before I found his name again on my appointment book When I entered the interview-room, he stood up and with a vigour I had never previously noticed about him, he literally crushed my hand with his hand-clasp.

"Well, my friend, what is on your mind this time?" I asked.

Quickly he replied. "Don't you worry I am not going to confess that matter again. I just came in to tell you that at last I am through with it. I only want to tell you that the very minute I decided the whole matter was finally cleared up, that God truly had forgiven me, then I did as you suggested, I forgave myself and at last I walked away from it. It seemed to drop away, and I actually have left it behind"

Then he added "I have committed to memory that passage of Scripture that you gave me, and what a wonderful thing it is It really works; at any rate it has for me"

The passage from the Bible which I gave him is this "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward . . ." (Philippians iii. 13-14). So, don't keep your troubles to

yourself But once having told them to a competent counsellor and been forgiven by God, and having found release, then truly forgive yourself and turn your back definitely on them. Fill your mind with hopeful, helpful and positive thoughts. Have faith and go forward. Don't look back March straight ahead, for always life lies straight ahead—never backward Press forward.

Once in my counselling work I had a unique experience in this connection. A little, white-haired old lady came to see me. She was obviously under great distress. She had a very sweet face, one not unlike Whistler's immortal portrait of a mother. As the series of interviews progressed, I found myself more and more drawn to the conclusion that it was a guilt case It seemed unlikely, in view of the gentleness and beauty of her personality, yet I realised that a competent physician of the soul must explore every possibility. Therefore with exceeding diffidence I raised the question whether in her experience she had acquired a sense of guilt, whether she had committed a sin, or, what is more subtle, whether she thought she had done so.

It turned out that the last was the answer to the problem. She related that as a young girl of about eighteen years of age she had been very much in love. She had been raised in a strict Christian home and her ideals of personal conduct and personal purity were very high The young man with whom she was in love was a bit more flexible in his morality and it seems that they verged on the commission of a sex sin. His insistence to yield to his false moral reasoning was considerable She assured me, however, that she did not yield to him, but she said: "Here is the terrible thing about it—I desired to do so. It was only after the most awful battle with myself that I was able to resist it."

Now she said. "I read in the Bible 'That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart'. So I saw at once my guilt I had not performed this act, but it had been my desire, therefore I was just as guilty as if I had done so. All my life long," she concluded, "I have lived a clean, righteous life, but in this I sinned and it has haunted me and I know that when I die I will be damned," so concluded her pathetic story.

I pointed out to her that we cannot govern the thoughts that come into our minds In the words of an old saying: "You cannot keep the birds from flying over your head, but

you can keep them from building nests in your hair." I explained that actually what she had done was to achieve a great moral and spiritual victory. I told her that she had met the enemy on the battlefield of her life and after a terrible battle had destroyed him, and that rather than condemn herself she should thank God that she had the inner strength to win this struggle But it was to no avail The idea of guilt so long held could not be that easily dissipated.

Finally I did something which is perhaps not regular in Protestant practice, but it was effective. I asked her to remove her hat and I had her kneel at the altar of the church. Standing behind the altar, I said to her "You recognise me, do you not, as a minister of the Church?"

She said "Yes"

"As a minister of the Church, do I stand as a human representative to you of God?"

"Yes," she said, "you do."

"Do you believe that God will forgive you of any wrong and take the burden of any guilt off your mind, and do you now confess your wrongdoing and trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour?"

"Yes," she said, "I sincerely believe, and I do put my faith in Christ."

I then laid my hand upon her head I was touched by this and I can yet remember my hand resting upon her snowy white hair. She was at least seventy-five years old, perhaps as good a woman as ever walked the earth, a saint though she did not know it. I then said to her. "In the name of Jesus Christ, who alone can forgive sins, I declare that by His power you are forgiven for any wrong. Go and sin no more," and I added. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward . . ."

After a moment or two of quiet prayer, she stood up and looked at me. I have often seen glory on human faces, but never more resplendent than that on her face. "I feel so happy. I think it is gone," she said simply.

She lived for four years after that and several times she said to me: "Why didn't I go to somebody long years ago and have that thing taken away?"

She learned the value of not keeping her troubles to herself. She found that anyone can be released from his troubles

CHAPTER THREE

HOW TO GET RID OF YOUR INFERIORITY COMPLEX

"THERE is enough atomic energy in the body of one man to destroy the city of New York," says a prominent physicist. We read these words with surface understanding, but let us try to press them deep into our minds and realise them. There is enough power in *you* to blow a capital city to rubble That, and nothing less, is what advanced physics tells us.

That being so, and it is undeniable, why have an inferiority complex? If there is literally enough force in you to blow up the greatest city in the world, there is also literally enough power in you to overcome every obstacle in your life.

Pythagoras was absolutely right. "Know yourself," he urged That includes knowing your powers. When you do know yourself and realise tremendous power within yourself, you will then know that you do not need to be a defeated person—defeated because you are beset by a false feeling of inferiority

Quite possibly you often do feel defeated Depression settles over you, bringing the disheartening feeling that there isn't much use in fighting on Probably everybody is tempted to sink into this dull and gloomy attitude occasionally, but not everybody yields to it. Those who accept the idea that they are defeated usually *are* beaten, for, as a famous psychologist says "There is a deep tendency in human nature to become like that which you imagine yourself to be" Believe you are defeated, believe it long enough, and it is likely to become a fact—even though "there is enough atomic energy in the body of one man to destroy a capital city".

But notice people who achieve happiness and success are those who when they tend to sink into a depressed mood shake it off by refusing to accept the idea of defeat. They refuse to entertain the thought that situations and circumstances, or their enemies, have them down. They know it is the *thought* of defeat that causes defeat, so they practise thinking positive thoughts. Indomitable thoughts, thoughts of faith surge through their minds. They train their minds to think victory. As a result they gain victory.

Basically the inferiority complex—habitually feeling inferior to others—arises from wrong thinking acquired either in childhood or as a result of later experiences. An inferiority complex may be defined as a system of emotionally toned ideas ranged around one central idea—disbelief in one's self.

Symptoms of an inferiority complex may be recognised by the way you tend to compensate; that is, by the method your subconscious mind uses to make up for inferiority feelings. If we look briefly at certain types of compensation, we shall gain a comprehensive idea of how disbelief in one's self influences human behaviour.

There is the type of personality which over-asserts itself. The victim, instead of walking, struts. He is pompous. When he talks it is likely to be in a loud voice. When he discusses any subject, he gives the impression of knowing all there is to know. You say "How conceited he is!" Not necessarily. It might be more accurate to say. "How sick he is." Beneath his pompous assertiveness he has a profound feeling of inadequacy. His overbearing attitude is the way his mind unconsciously seeks to make up for the inferiority feeling. He is not deliberately or consciously doing this. It is the unconscious effort of his mind to save face. It is his subconscious mind over-asserting itself.

In contrast, but from the same cause, there is the under-assertive type. For example, you sometimes meet a man on the links who plays golf very well, but always acts in a super-modest way. He says "I would like to play, but I'm out of practice and am poor at best. I'm not at all a good golfer." To get him to play you have to coax him. The queer twist here is that the man is egotistic over his humility. A normal person will say: "Sure, I'll be glad to play," and will play the best game he can with relaxed naturalness.

Still another form of compensation is that in which a person manifests an inferiority complex by an infantile reaction.

Years ago I worked in a newspaper office in a certain city where I encountered a woman who illustrated this type. She came bristling into the newspaper and actually complained because she did not get her picture in the paper in connection with a society function. After she left the office the city editor said. "I don't understand that woman." That isn't all he said, but that is the part that is printable. At the time I did not understand her, either, but I think I do now. As a baby every time she dropped her rattle, somebody rescued

it at once. When she cried for anything she got it. When she became an adult she expected the world to continue to baby her. She is still essentially a baby, with a strong sense of inadequacy. She retreats into an infantile manifestation of inferiority

The inferiority complex sometimes takes a curious turn. A deep inner feeling of inadequacy may manifest itself in an unreasonable desire to dominate A person who in infancy was over-dominated may in adult life over-compensate by himself seeking to dominate others This person may not, indeed usually does not, recognise this cause of his own attitudes, nor do others with whom he is associated. In any abnormal emotional situation, among other possible causes that of hidden inferiority may wisely be explored.

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A woman came to interview me because, as she put it, she "could hardly live any more".

"I am surrounded," she complained, "by people who are constantly in turmoil. I must have peace or I'll go mad."

Her home, she said, was "bedlam"—in upheaval all the time. Everybody in her home was nervous—it was a highly-strung, tense household "Why," she fumed, "it's just awful" She said she was so highly strung she couldn't sleep. In short, she declared, an intolerable situation

I asked her to bring her husband to see me, thinking perhaps he might be the cause of this turmoil, but he proved to be a meek, mild-mannered little man. He sat quietly while she did all the talking. Obviously he was a defeated personality He would even look apprehensively at her before speaking, then speak timorously.

I decided to persuade the members of the family to go away from home one after the other, calculating that if the turmoil ceased in the absence of any one of them, the one who went away was, by a process of elimination, the cause of the upheaval. That seemed a simple way to work things out. The children went away first, one after the other, then the husband went off, but nothing happened to change the situation, which remained as tumultuous as ever

Finally I asked the wife to go away for a while.

"Well," she replied, "I don't think that will solve it If I go away, who will take care of the place?"

"Never mind that," I said. "You just go away. How long

have you been married?" She told me, and I said: "Any wife who has been married that long deserves a vacation. Go away somewhere for two weeks."

She went away for a fortnight. When she left home everything calmed down It became quiet and peaceful Although some of the household tasks were not done efficiently, it was a place of peace and quiet.

"How are things?" I asked the husband.

He whispered "Wonderful—great." Looking furtively about, he confided: "Everything is marvellous"

After two weeks the wife returned and came in with her husband to talk with me, I said. "We have made an experiment. We sent the three children away one by one and nothing happened. We sent the husband away; nothing happened We sent the wife away and everything became peaceful."

"Yes," she admitted, "that's what they say." After pondering for a moment, she asked reflectively: "You don't suppose I could be the cause of it, do you?"

At this her husband came to life with magnificent assertiveness, and said: "Yes, Mary, you are the cause."

She turned to him and snapped: "You keep out of this—I'll decide for myself."

"What is my trouble?" she asked.

I liked her; she was honest. She knew the fault lay within herself, and she wanted the answer. When the mechanism of inferiority was described in the light of her reactions, she recognised the accuracy of the diagnosis She was unconsciously over-compensating for domination she had suffered in childhood Her mind took this method of trying to escape from a deep inferiority feeling.

She asked for guidance in correcting her personality faults A definite and detailed plan of spiritual technique was outlined for her She was a forthright character, and she put it into practice, with the result that the situation was completely rectified.

One day she wisely observed "Perhaps the best way to change a situation is to change yourself."

. . . . .

Know yourself—change yourself—that is very important. But there is an even deeper factor in eradicating inferiority, and it is to be found among the vast psychological riches of the Bible. Among the possible methods, one of the best

and surest is the formula contained in the words: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans viii. 31.)

That formula has incalculable potency. If you believe what those words imply, you will develop faith in your own powers. Furthermore, you will discover that faith releases forces which come powerfully to your aid

Let me give you a graphic illustration of the manner in which this formula works.

In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, I met Arthur Poe, one of the famous six Poe brothers who played football at Princeton around the turn of the century. The Poes are probably the most famous football family in American athletic history, for all six of the brothers were stars of the first magnitude.

That night in my speech in Cedar Rapids I emphasised at some length the power of positive thinking, and asserted that practice of the techniques of faith makes it possible for a person to overcome difficulties Positive thinking was outlined as a cure for the inferiority complex.

After the meeting a man introduced himself as Arthur Poe. He said "You are right about the power of positive thought, and my own experience has proven to me conclusively what real faith can do Without it I would have had a terrible inferiority complex."

When he went up to Princeton as Poe Number Five, having been preceded by four great football brothers, he, too, wanted to carry on the family tradition. He went out for football and made the freshman team. But late in the season he suffered a very severe injury to his leg. The doctors told him that he would never again be able to play football. Naturally, he was heart-broken. Throughout the winter and summer he nursed his leg, but the verdict held that he was through with football

Finally, at his mother's suggestion, Poe adopted the mental attitude of putting the matter of his injured leg in the hands of God He developed the capacity and skill of having faith. He practised mentally accepting the formula: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

"As a result," he said, "I played football at Princeton."

I looked up the athletic record of Arthur Poe at Princeton, and found that when he said: "I played football at Princeton," he was engaging in magnificent understatement. He did play, and with such brilliance that the memory of his athletic exploits still has the power to thrill old Princetonians and others of a later generation who hear the story.

It was November 12, 1898. The big Princeton-Yale game was in progress. No score had been made. Princeton was being forced back towards its own goal-line. Yale, marching down the field, apparently could not be stopped But Durston of Yale fumbled, and a boy whom they said could never again play football scooped up the ball. Shaking off Yale tacklers, he started to run. He forgot about his leg. He ran like a sprinter. Down the field he went as fleet as a deer—thrilling, inspiring. Ninety-five yards, the length of the field, he ran, crossing the goal-line ten feet ahead of the nearest Yale man. Arthur Poe, running on a leg that was supposed to be incapacitated, beat Yale single-handed. The final score was 6–0.

On November 25, 1899, Yale and Princeton were again battling for supremacy. It was the last thirty seconds of play. Suddenly the ball shot into the hands of Arthur Poe. He fell back as if to kick, but nobody expected him to kick, for with that bad leg he had never before attempted it. Everybody expected him to run, but he did not have time to run 'It was kick or nothing. Arthur Poe drew back, dropped the ball, his toe caught it, and in a beautiful arc it sailed across the goal-post, touching the ground just as the whistle blew, and Princeton won by a single point.

Arthur Poe did not tell me this story When I read the account I have just summarised, I remembered the conviction in his voice as he said that all his life long he had practised the principle that a man can overcome any obstacle by a simple faith in God.

How easy it would have been for young Poe to have developed an inferiority complex! He could easily have been thwarted in his ambition to play football, and, what is worse, he could have gone through life defeated by an inner sense of inadequacy. He refused to accept an inferiority complex. Arthur Poe got rid of it before it took root by the simple expedient of intelligently employing his religious faith.

The victim of the inferiority complex always tends to think he is defeated. Thinking so helps to produce that outcome But the mental attitude of putting up a fight gets results, especially when you have developed and regularly practised the thought pattern that you have an invincible ally Say it this way: "If God be for me, who can be against me?"

Do you recall the immortal and ancient parable of the two frogs who fell into a jar of cream? The top of the cream was quite a distance from the opening of the jar. The frogs tried to leap out, but could not make it. They struggled, they stewed, they fretted, they did everything possible to get out, all without success.

Finally one frog assumed a negative attitude He began to think defeat thoughts, and the acids of futility started to spread through his mind. He became a pessimist. He said to himself· "I know I can't get out of this jar of cream, so why should I wear myself out trying? I have to die, anyway, so why not get it over; why not die in peace?" In despair and resignation he sank into the cream and died. His epitaph was "He died of an inferiority complex"

The other frog was made of sterner stuff He had a different training and background, and evidently came of a long line of dauntless frogs He was a positive thinker. He said to himself "Sure, I may die, but if I do I shall go down with every flag flying. But I shall fight my way out of this if it is humanly [I suppose that should be "froggily"] possible; and if in the end I can't make it, I shall die proudly in the glorious tradition of the ancient and honourable frogs"

With this he went at it with all his vigour He swam around, he thrashed about, he beat the cream and made a great stir. As a result, gradually he began to feel solid footing under him and his activity churned the cream into butter Finally his legs, whipping like little pistons, got traction, and he leaped victoriously from the jar, the contents of which had now turned into solid butter.

. . .

Religious faith puts fight into a man so that he develops a terrific resistance to defeat Obstacles no longer awe him. He uses obstacles as stepping-stones to cross over from failure to success

Fortitude and faith are the words. That is what keeps a man going when he seems defeated Believe that if you put your trust in God and keep at things with unremitting energy and intelligence you, too, can build a solid foundation beneath you upon which you may mount up to victory. Therefore, train your mind never to accept the thought of defeat about anything. That verse from the Bible makes an unbeatable inspiration in any situation "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Hold it habitually in mind and it

will train you to believe in yourself by constantly reminding you that you have extra power available.

I have put a religious slant into the curing of inferiority for one reason only *Christianity is entirely practical* It is astounding how defeated persons can be changed into victorious individuals when they actually utilise their religious faith as a workable instrument I am so sure of this that I unhesitatingly assert that I have never seen anything that can really down a person and keep him down if that person definitely and intelligently practises his faith. There is no situation which I have ever seen—and as a minister I've seen plenty—in which faith in God will not help.

In a hard spot, practise saying over and over to yourself making the statement personal· "If God be for *me*, who can be against *me*?" This practice will eventually cause acceptance by your mind of the powerful thought that your inadequacy is relieved by greater force Practise saying this formula and keep on saying it, perseverance will get results Faith is a vital medium for recreating strength, hope and efficiency. It has a strange therapeutic and recreative effect I could cite many cases in support of the preceding sentence, but the following incident is typical of them all.

A soldier came home from overseas minus a leg. The amputation following battle wounds shocked the boy's mind deeply. He lay on his bed neither smiling nor speaking—just staring at the ceiling He would not co-operate in learning to wear an artificial limb, although others around him were doing so. Obviously his problem was not his physical body but was in his mind and spirit. So deep was his acquired inferiority that he had completely given way to defeat

It was thought that a period of time at his own home might help bring him out of himself and assist in lifting his depression He came of a well-to-do family, and at home he had every attention In fact, his family over-did it He was tenderly lifted into his bath, he was hovered over and coddled in every conceivable manner This is understandable, for everybody wants to show love and appreciation for a boy who has sacrificed himself for his country

However, the doctor realised that they were making a permanent invalid of the boy. Accordingly he placed him in a convalescent hospital An effort was made to help him to help himself, and to give him a normal attitude towards the problem of himself, but with no success. He continued to lie on his bed, indifferent and unco-operative

One day the rather baffled and exasperated young doctor said. "I have got to be hard on the boy, I hate to do it, but somehow I must break through this wall around him. He must cast out this inferiority psychosis if he is to return to normal living."

He said "Soldier, we are not going to pamper you any more, or carry you around. You have got to be awakened, boy. We can do nothing for you until you open that mind of yours. We all feel sorry about that leg, but other men have lost legs in battle and they have carried on with good spirit. Besides, a man can live and be happy and have a successful career without a leg or an arm or an eye." The doctor pointed out how people are able to adjust themselves, and how so many have done astounding things

This talk did not move the boy in the slightest. Finally, after many days of attempting to open the closed mind of his patient, the doctor quite unconsciously did a peculiar thing, something which amazed even himself

The doctor was not a particularly religious person, and up to this point had seldom, if ever, mentioned religion in his practice. However, this day in sheer desperation the doctor literally shouted at the boy. "All right, all right; if you won't let any of us help you—if you are so stubborn that you won't even help yourself—then, then—why don't you let God help you? Get up and get that leg on; you know how to do it"

With this he left the room

A few hours later it was reported that the boy was up, had on his artificial leg, and was moving around The doctor said that one of the most thrilling moments in his medical experience came some days later, when he saw this boy walking around the grounds with a girl friend.

Later, when the soldier was discharged from the hospital, he came in to see the doctor. The physician started to give him some suggestions, but the boy said "It's all right, Doc; I remember the medicine you gave me that day And I think with that prescription I can get along well enough"

"What prescription?" asked the doctor.

"Don't you remember the day you told me that if I could not do it myself, to let God help me? Well, that did something to me. I felt sort of different inside, and as I thought about it, it began to come over me that maybe I could do it —that maybe I wasn't finished after all"

As the physician related this story he sat tapping his desk

with a pencil in a thoughtful manner. "Whatever happened to that boy I cannot explain; the process eludes my knowledge But I do know that in some spiritual manner that boy was released His mind changed from a state of inner defeat to one of personal power." He hesitated, then added "There seems to be a very great power in religious faith when it is practised"

And he is right. Use your religious faith and you do not need to be a defeated person It will recondition your mind from negative to positive reactions. It makes possible what formerly seemed impossible. This is the mechanism which explains the Biblical statement. "With men things are impossible, but with God all things are possible" When you mentally live with thoughts of God, your inferiority changes to power, impossibility changes to possibility

In fact, that brief statement of ten short words from the Bible which I have quoted several times can absolutely revolutionise your life. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Strong, sturdy words these. With these ten words of power you can stand up against any human situation and not be defeated.

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In ridding oneself of an inferiority complex, the techniques at hand should not be underrated because they are simple The purpose is to change the thought slant Inferiority is a malady of the thoughts, and any device, however simple, that changes the pattern of thinking may be employed.

A young man came to see me who said he was having a nervous breakdown He did not look it; he was a vigorous, healthy person. He was a bit on edge, however, and obviously highly strung He was not having a nervous breakdown, but was trying to imagine himself into one He sat in my office reciting one by one the "enormous" difficulties he was then experiencing. I made a few suggestions of an optimistic character, but he immediately leaped upon them and began to tell why they couldn't be done. He was expert in advancing objections He was what I once heard a business man refer to as an "obstacle man"—a man adept in finding obstacles He leaped on these suggestions of mine with such vigour and alacrity, such condemnatory skill, that he almost convinced me that everything *was* against him.

Finally, I said to him· "It is a shame that life is treating

you so badly and that you are a failure. It is too bad, too, that you are breaking down and going to pieces; I feel very sorry for you."

He looked at me in amazement, and then he all but got out of his chair; he sat on the edge of it. There was a flash in his eyes and a flush on his face. His whole manner became aggressive.

"I am not a failure," he snapped He threw back his head with the air of saying "I can do things"

Indeed, he then did everything but call me names, and I looked admiringly at him and said "Wonderful That's wonderful!"

"If you would get up each morning and talk to yourself in the mirror just as you are talking now," I advised, "you would convince yourself that you have strength and power and possibilities within you." I actually urged him to stand before a mirror and talk to himself in just that fashion, and to say out loud the ten tremendous words. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

He actually did just that! His wife told me she was never so amazed as to hear her big, strapping husband talking with himself in the bedroom, standing before a mirror saying to himself "You can do things. You have brains. God is with you. If God be for you, who can be against you?" She walked in on him and found him thus, to his embarrassment.

That man now has a grip on himself. When I meet him, as I do occasionally, he says "It is all due to a text—yes, a text" While the text helped, of course, so had the simple procedure which he practised. It was designed to get his mind to thinking the idea contained in the Bible text

It works when you believe it—and practise it. He learned the secret of driving off his inferiority complex by employing a practical formula.

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The simple but effective technique of faith described above is greatly needed to-day, for everywhere human beings are afflicted with the inferiority complex The feeling of inadequacy or inferiority is a widespread deterrent in personality development. It may well be that the rise of inferiority as a personality problem is due to the decline of religion among the people If there is a connection between the decline of religion and the prevalence of inferiority, then

the remedy is plain: revive religious faith and inferiority feelings will diminish. The spiritual principles suggested here are not theoretical. It is a proven fact, demonstrated in case after case, that religious faith properly applied can rid people of the inferiority complex.

Those ten words from the Bible contain the basic solution to the inferiority complex. They represent one of the greatest, if not the greatest, spiritual and psychological facts in releasing personality; namely, the thought of God's presence with *you*. Practise believing that God is with you and you will get to believing that nothing *can* be against you. By a subconscious procedure the sense of inferiority and inadequacy gradually gives way to one of confidence and faith.

Fear and faith, as previously pointed out, are the two greatest powers competing for control of the human mind. Inferiority and inadequacy on the one side; faith and effectiveness on the other—that is the issue. But never forget that faith is stronger than fear, adequacy is stronger than inadequacy.

Repeat those ten words of reassurance a half-dozen times every day, let them saturate your mind. When you face a critical or difficult situation, practise saying to yourself: "God is with me; I can meet the crisis that I now face."

I have a friend, a successful business man named Jerry Henderson, who practises this technique, and I am indebted to him for a very striking story of its efficiency. You will see by this story that I have not made exaggerated claims.

Henderson was in the Canadian Rockies at Lake Louise to climb and to ski with a party of friends. Shortly before, one of the most famous ski masters had been killed in a heavy avalanche and the suggestion of danger was potent.

Henderson's party went with their guide to climb White Eagle peak. They climbed all morning, and by noontime had surmounted five thousand of the nine thousand feet they had set out to climb. At this point the guide told them that they had to cross a transverse valley lying before them. The sides shot down at an angle of forty-five to fifty degrees.

"Do not call or whistle or raise your voices, for it might start an avalanche," the guide warned. Since hearing of the death of the ski master all had been impressed by the danger of avalanches.

The guide took from his pack a big ball of red yarn. He cut off fifty-foot lengths and gave to each one

"Tie this around your waist," he said. "If an avalanche starts, shake off your skis, throw away your poles and start swimming just as if you were in the water. This will tend to bring you to the top. If the avalanche buries you, the end of this red yarn will protrude and we can find you"

In the party was a girl in her twenties. She looked down at this steep declivity and thought of the possibility of an avalanche, and she became very frightened. She began to whimper and cry, and said to Jerry Henderson: "I can't do it I'm terrified. I simply can't do it."

He did not feel any too blithe about it himself, but Henderson believes in and practises the ten great words He takes the position that one need not fear if God is with him, that one can reasonably count on God to see him through whatever comes.

He turned to the trembling, hysterical girl and said quietly. "The Lord has watched over you throughout your life, hasn't He? You believe that, do you not?"

"Yes," she sobbed.

"Well, then, can't you trust Him to take care of you for the next twenty minutes?" he asked.

A remarkable change came over the girl She made the descent beautifully, taking her place in the long graceful line as each skier followed the other about forty yards apart She made the descent with exultation. She had achieved a marvellous sense of victory over herself. She learned that there is a secret through which one can get rid of this inferiority complex.

Try simple religious practices. They work You can be rid of your inferiority complex

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW TO ACHIEVE A CALM CENTRE FOR YOUR LIFE

High tension is a prevailing malady in the modern world. The adult who has not apprehensively watched the doctor take his blood-pressure is in the minority Glance at the obituary columns of the daily papers, and note how often the cause of death is high blood-pressure, angina pectoris,

and other hypertension afflictions. Many "strokes" have excessive tension as a contributing, if not a root, cause. For multitudes of highly-strung, nervous people life is constant and unrelieved strain.

A well-known physician says. "American business and professional men are not living out their normal life expectancies. The tension and pressure of these troublous times, the pace of American life, worry, and uncertainty, are wreaking havoc among these men of forty and more They are dying altogether too soon

"Heart disease, high blood-pressure and arterial disease, kidney disease, nervous disorders, cancer, gastro-intestinal troubles—these are the worst enemies of America's men of responsibility and leadership Note that few of these are germ-caused diseases; they fall into the classification of 'degenerative diseases'.

"We know how to control the germ-caused diseases typhoid, scarlet fever, diphtheria, smallpox and tuberculosis. But the degenerative diseases which come about because of the age of the individual plus wrong living habits, too much work, strain, stress, too little rest and relaxation, are the troubles which are mowing down so many of our valuable people forty years of age or more.

"Worry, fear, strain, overwork, under-rest, excesses in sex, nicotine and alcohol, wrong diet, overweight, all may bring your blood-pressure to dangerous heights Twenty-five per cent of all deaths of those men over fifty years of age are due to hypertension." *

Apparently Americans have always been more or less of this tense type. A French writer went there in 1830 to study the American, whom he classified as "a new breed of man on the earth". The French visitor noted the restless aggressiveness of our people.

"The American," he complained, "is so restless that he has even invented a chair, called a rocking-chair, in which he can move while he sits."

If this French observer could see America now he would surely be forced to revise upwards his conclusions, as the tempo has mounted.

A Scottish physician states: "Americans wear too much expression on their faces. Some are living with all their nerves in action"

* M. A Mortensen, M D, in *Battle Creek Sanatorium News*, Vol. 13, No. 3

Sometimes our worry over our national tenseness takes a grotesque form. . . . Two women in a Florida city were overheard talking about their troubles, consisting mainly of bad hearts and high blood-pressure. It seems that men go about the streets of this city with blood-pressure instruments and do quite a business

One woman asked "Did you have that man down on blank street take your blood-pressure?"

"No, indeed, I did not He charges twenty-five cents. I had mine taken by the man up on the other street, who only charges fifteen cents," replied the other woman.

A primary factor in tension is mental disorganisation. The helter-skelter mind always feels overburdened. A disorderly mental state means confusion and, of course, tension Such a mind rests lightly upon problems which it never decides It skips nervously from one presented problem to another, never arriving at a settled conclusion, in fact, not even grappling seriously with the issue involved Thus deferred decisions accumulate. The result? The mind gives up and cries desperately "I am swamped"—simply because it is not organised It is cluttered up and *seems*, therefore, to be overwhelmed Note the emphasis, *seems*.

The mind in this situation reacts somewhat like the body in shivering One shivers when passing suddenly from a warm to a cold area, the body attempts to accommodate itself quickly to the sudden change in body temperature. It has been estimated that as much energy is expended in a half-minute of shivering as in several hours of work This results in depletion of vigour. In a similar way, shivering in the mind depletes its force when one fails to practise the fundamental principle of mental organisation.

Get the calm selective ability to take up one thing at a time and concentrate upon it Deal finally with it, if possible before passing to the next matter

In my office we receive a heavy daily mail covering a wide variety of matters We operate on the policy that every letter gets an answer. I used to come to my office and find a formidable pile of letters—and be dismayed Contemplating the labour of thinking out replies to those letters, my mind would inwardly (and sometimes outwardly) complain "Oh my, oh my, how can I ever get these letters answered?" It was the "I am swamped" reaction. But I learned that the

way to answer letters is to answer them as they arrive. A letter unanswered for two weeks has answered itself.

There is only one way to work down a pile of letters. Pick up the first letter, decide upon an answer, and dictate that answer at once. If information not immediately obtainable is required, dictate a memorandum pertaining to it and put the letter in the proper receptacle. If additional study is indicated, place it in a receptacle for pending matters—but don't let them "pend" too long. Handle the letter in some way. Do not put it down indecisively, only to pick it up aimlessly again and again. If you follow this ineffective course, the letters will pile up until your desk is a nightmare, and your mind will fight back with the cry: "I can't stand it—this strain is too much." Then your mind will tell you that you are unequal to your job, and if you keep at this procedure too long you may have a nervous breakdown.

When you organise your mind, a sense of power will come to you, and you will soon wonder at the ease with which you can handle responsibilities. Your capacity for work will increase; so will your pleasure in what you are doing. Strain and tension will subside.

A careful and consistent cultivation of a relaxed mental attitude is important in reducing tension. Americans are inheritors of the Horatio Alger tradition: "strive and succeed." The author is an apostle of hard work, of the good old principle of creating your own wealth and position by means of your own abilities and efforts. But there is a sense in which it is a mistake to try too hard. Effortless ease is the procedure best designed to achieve superior results with the least strain. Athletes know that trying too hard throws them off their timing. The fine co-ordination which characterises the great men of sport is attained by the principle of "taking the game in stride". They do not go into the game to make a record, or get the headlines, or to become stars. They play the game for the love of it. They are alert, they think of the team rather than themselves. They play the game with naturalness and so to the full extent of their ability.

The sports writer, Grantland Rice, reports a conversation with Joe Gordon, then of the New York Yankees, in which the famous player told of an experience in World Series baseball. In his first World Series, Gordon said he was "tied up" all the time. "I wanted to make a great record and hit the headlines. As a result I became tense and rigid and did

poorly." In the next series Joe Gordon was wiser. He decided to forget he was playing in a World Series. He determined instead to play ball just as he had on the sand lots, "because it is the grandest game in the world", and to have a good time playing. This released the tension in his mind, and therefore in his nerves and muscles. He became a natural player As a result he made a much better record in the second series, in fact, he was one of the stars.

In a World Series game, "Dizzy" Trout was on the mound for the Detroit Tigers He wore glasses. He had been ill and without practice for two weeks, and it was so damp before the game that he couldn't limber up his muscles and get relaxed. And yet he had to go into a World Series game before 42,000 fans in a hostile city and pitch. That demanded calmness, and he had his own way of securing it.

When things got tense, as they did quite often, he simply took off his glasses and wiped them painstakingly, while 42,000 people watched expectantly and the batter at the plate fidgeted Then he put on his glasses and began pitching, and one by one the Cubs struck out.

There's calmness for you! Some wag remarked that all of the Chicago Cubs would wear spectacles the next season

Whatever your work may be—writing books, teaching children, running a business, cooking for a family, working in a factory, ploughing a field, or preaching sermons—give your job your best, work hard, slight nothing, take everything in your stride; stay relaxed. Don't try too hard for effect; do not strain for success. Do your job naturally, because you like it, and success will take care of itself

I learned this basic truth from a porter in a Chicago station I was on my way to speak in a city in Western Illinois, and had three "important" calls to make in Chicago between trains, but my train from New York got later and later. I paced the corridor and fumed and fretted I worked myself into a fair-sized dither Finally the train rolled into the grimy, cavernous terminal With ill-concealed impatience I waited for the porter to get the bags on to the station platform I was the first man off, and luckily secured a porter, as I had two heavy bags.

"Please bring those bags quickly," I directed "I am in a terrible hurry"

I started at high speed down the platform. Conscious that he was not following, I turned impatiently. "Come

on, I'm late." But there stood the porter calmly looking at me

"Where you steamin' for, brother?" he asked me. "That ain't no way to make time" Then he said "Just walk on ahead and I'll come along, and there won't be two minutes between us." I slowed down as admonished and walked along beside his truck He turned and gave me one of those big smiles with which coloured men are blessed, and said· "I'se livin' de relaxed life. . . . Take it easy, boss," he advised. "You can do a lot in a short time if you just go along easy at it Besides," he concluded, "you'll live longer."

"Thanks, my friend," I said, rather humbly. "I happen to be a minister, and I will preach this idea to my congregation Do you go to church?"

"Yes, indeed, suh, I sure does; and" (here he finished me completely) "I tries to practise what I hear there."

So I slowed down, made my calls, and had time to spare, but I was tired before I got started Much of the energy needed for the day had been nervously dissipated by tension. Relaxation is best secured by remembering that "Easy does it". Practise using the light touch and you will be surprised to find that success comes easily.

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It is important to maintain a constant intake of energy A National War Fitness Conference held during World War II days was attended by educators and representatives of the armed services who came together to discuss recreation. The value of games and calisthenics was emphasised, but the conference surprisingly declared that the best recreation is to go to church. Recreation means *re-creation*, they explained.

By going to church and practising the technique of spiritual living, one can establish contact with the basic flow of energy which we call God's power. The New Testament says "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." This means that God does not create a man and then abandon him to get along as best he can on his own. He makes it possible for a constant re-creation or renewal to take place By utilising methods of contacts which are known to be effective, spiritual energy renews power in the soul, the mind, and the body. The electric clock is automatically rewound by the current flowing through the

universe In similar manner people are revitalised who maintain a close spiritual contact. It is the natural way to live

Mrs Thomas A Edison described her husband to me as "Nature's man". "He could work long and hard," she said, "then lie on his old couch and immediately go to sleep. He would relax completely and sleep soundly. When he awakened he was instantly wide awake and refreshed."

The inventor did not find it necessary to woo sleep or to fight his way back to an awakening. Thomas Edison seemed to be carried along by some flow of power.

"Never," said Mrs Edison, "was there any disunity of mind, never obsessions or impeded flow of energy. He was like a child in God's hands; Nature's man. Perhaps this was one reason God could pour all those wonderful ideas through his mind."

It appears that the wizard of Menlo Park was in harmony with the universe, and therefore the secret places were unlocked for him. Edison "lived and moved and had his being" in the source of never-failing energy and adjusted personality.

The thought that a human being can sensitise and tune his personality so that he can be the beneficiary of an automatic renewal of power is of such importance as to merit experiment. I know a business man whose imperturbability, inner peace and poise are impressive Yet he confesses that his major problem was tension. But he discovered a workable technique for living without tension.

"I need to be renewed at least twice a day," he explained. "I retire into my private office at eleven o'clock each morning just when one begins to have a let-down feeling and spend two minutes in meditation Again at four o'clock, the time of the late afternoon energy lag, I repeat the same process"

This two-minute period of meditation does not take the usual form of prayer This man does not consider his problems during this period, but instead "thinks" about God He dwells upon thoughts of God's peace. He affirms God's presence He conceives of spiritual strength as flowing into his being He reports that these four minutes per day result in so marked a refreshment that it amounts to a complete renewal of energy in body and fresh clarity of mind He declares this daily practice to be far superior to "pick-me-ups" previously relied upon.

A young officer had been shot down on his thirty-first bombing mission. His plane cracked up, and so did he—not physically, but emotionally. The crash, plus the strain and tension of his job, put him into a serious nervous state.

"It's how I feel inside that makes it so hard," he explained. "I'd almost rather have lost a limb than to feel all the time like a volcano about to blow up. I feel as if I would burst into a hundred pieces, and there are times when I want to scream—to shriek. The worst of it is I can't sleep, and when morning comes I think. 'How will I ever get through this day?' I'm certainly shot" He concluded with this pathetic statement: "I'm sick of myself. I don't like living with myself any more"

No one could blame the poor fellow He was drawn taut, like a stretched rubber band. He could not relax, or rest. There was no peace in him. Little wonder he felt about himself as he did

I assured him that he could work out of this condition. I happened to know of some medicine that could help him, and told him about it.

"Do you pray?" I asked

"I try to, but it's hard thinking of the words My mind wanders and I get nervous," he replied, "so usually I end up by not praying very much" When asked if he tried to read the Bible, he stated that any kind of reading was impossible, he could not concentrate It "got him all tensed up", he said; made him want to shriek.

This boy was in a bad state of nerves. However, his trouble was not in his body, but in his mind Nervous states, tension, inner turmoil, are usually not caused by any physical damage, but rather by disorganisation of thoughts. Of course, I realised it would be of little value to say "Cheer up—you'll be all right Have faith and pray." He needed to know "how" to do that

I gave him the following advice "When you go to bed to-night, practise relaxing Raise your arms and let them fall limply by your sides Repeat this three or four times. Think of your entire body as being filled with peace. Close your eyes lightly and think of the tension as going out of the eyelids Try relaxing the eyelids by thinking of them falling shut limply, somewhat as your arms fell by your sides

"Then, lying relaxed with lights out, say, preferably out loud, or quietly under your breath if with others, the simple words 'The Lord is my Shepherd.'

"Conceive of these words," I urged, "as a medicine which permeates your mind, sinking into the subconscious as you sleep; conceive that this medicine is extending its healing benefit throught the entire body and deep into the soul." I suggested also that he repeat this process before arising in the morning

The young officer tried this prescription, he really worked it, and it did him a vast amount of good. The old peace has now returned, the strain is gone. Remember—the trouble very likely is in your thought. Thoughts may be healed the same as a cut finger, only the medicine isn't iodine and salve; it's a much more effective healing agent—it is the thought of God's peace, His presence and power. It takes a thought to heal thoughts.

Sometimes our personal attitudes cause inner tension. A man told me that he would willingly trade his annual two-weeks' vacation from his job for a two-weeks' vacation from himself. Unfortunately that cannot be. We have to live with ourselves whether we like it or not, so the best course is to get so we can like it.

A friend of mine used to have a terrible time with himself. Everybody irritated him. He came into New York on a commuters' train each morning, and the people on the train got on his nerves. Much of the news he read in the paper made him mad. He was filled with resentments, not merely against people he knew, but also against people he saw, and people about whom he read and never saw. He ate his breakfast in a busy and crowded restaurant in the city, and the people there got on his nerves. "What's the matter with people nowadays?" he complained.

He finally discovered that it wasn't the people at all; that it was himself who was causing the irritation and tension He really did not hate other people basically; he hated himself. He was a sensitive and sore personality, a bundle of antagonisms organised around one central antagonism, namely, his own disastisfaction with himself. Of course, he derived no pleasure from living with himself. He was a personal civil war.

There are many people like this, poor souls; but there is an answer to this unhappy condition This man found it He could not change himself. There is not much point in trying that. So he asked God to change him. He then began practising Christ's attitude towards people. Presently he found that people and things didn't irritate him any

more. He found himself actually beginning to like people. People seemed different, but actually *he* was the one who was different Naturally when one has goodwill he exudes it unconsciously, and this in turn brings out good-will in others. At any rate, life became different because he was different. Now he enjoys life because he enjoys himself. He eliminated the irritable drive of tension

The foregoing experiences suggest the importance of definite exercises in reducing tension. The habitual practice of tested methods gets results Some prescriptions for the healing of tension are medical, others psychological, others spiritual, and still others, perhaps, partake of all three.

Following is a simple "prescription" which I, and hundreds who have tried it, have found to be very effective

Some years ago I was heavily borne down by the pressure of work, and fell into that frantic attitude of mind common to those who try to do too much in too short a time, or who at least have the notion that they are so doing, which is just as bad. The result was that I lost the capacity for sound, restful sleep. After tossing for several hours I arose about three o'clock one morning in an actue state of tension. Instead of reclining in a relaxed attitude, I had been lying in bed doubled up, as if expecting that at any moment the bed would collapse and precipitate me on to the floor. My mouth was dry, I was restless and hot I went into the library. I picked up several books, but none of them interested me What book is interesting in such circumstances? I stomped restlessly about, finally stopping at the window which I opened. I put my head out and looked up and down Fifth Avenue.

It was raining, and the rain fell upon my head. I turned my face up to the rain, which fell cool and refreshing upon my face. It ran down until presently I could taste it and smell it It occurred to me then that among all the things of this world which change, one thing never changes, and that is the taste and smell of rain Even falling through the murky skies of Manhattan, it tasted and smelled just as it did years ago in Ohio; I remembered the old rain-barrel at the corner of my boyhood home on a rainy day in May, when great pools where one splashed with bare feet formed under the trees It gave a momentary sense of peace and refreshment to reflect upon the changelessness of the rain.

Finally I sat down in an easy chair and picked up a little pamphlet. Leafing carelessly through it, I read:

"You are restless, you are tense. You are anxious and nervous. You cannot sleep."

"How in the world did you know that?" I cried in astonishment.

I continued reading. The writer said: "Practise a simple method for overcoming tension."

The pamphlet, which has long since disappeared (it contained little of value except the germ of an idea), suggested physical, mental and spiritual exercise which proved valuable. It being early in the morning, and having nothing else to do, I decided to try the suggestion offered. The method, later developed by additional experimentation, follows.

First of all, relax the body. To do this allow your head to fall back against the head-rest of your chair. Let it drop back easily, not in any sense rigid, but as though the head were falling off your shoulders. Then stretch out your feet as far as possible, and push your toes beyond that, as far as you can extend them. Raise the arms and let them fall limply and naturally by the side. Allow your hand to fall upon your knee, like a wet leaf on a log. What is more relaxed than a wet leaf on a log!

Sit loosely in the chair with every muscle relaxed, allowing the chair to bear the full weight of the body so that if the chair were removed the body would fall inertly to the floor.

After the body has been relaxed, relax the mind. We have a marvellous gift which we call imagination. By imagination one may transport himself hundreds of miles over mountain and sea, and return in the fraction of an instant. It is the true magic carpet. By it you can take a vacation trip without paying for a ticket or moving from your own home.

Imagine that you are, for example, in the north woods, peacefully sitting with your back to a tree. The atmosphere is redolent of pine and cedar and hemlock. All is quiet, save the natural sounds of the forest. Before you is a lake, its blue waters unruffled, except for the occasional leap of a fish. Looking through the trees you can see in the far distance great mountains, lost in a mystic haze of blue, shouldering out the sky. The sunlight is falling mellow and warm upon the earth, splashing down through the trees and dancing on the water of the lake.

Following this method of relaxation, I found I was attaining not only a sense of rest in body, but also a pervading calmness of mind. The mind was being relaxed by taking it away momentarily from the problems agitating it and rendering it incapable of rational functioning and collected thought. This had been accomplished in just a flashing moment of time.

A quick turning of the mind in prayer while engaged in the busy activities of the day is like that You do not need to go apart and kneel down to pray, although the posture of humility is helpful. Simply turn your thoughts to God. In so doing you are opening your mind to Him He will do the rest

The third and final element in this process of relaxation is the relaxation of the soul. The method is simple Relax the soul by the exercise of spiritual thinking Fix the mind on God Think of God in whatever terms He is most understandable to you. People have many differing conceptions of God. When the name of God is spoken different minds instantly form varying pictures. But think of God in terms of His kindliness, His watchful care, His compassion and understanding

In relaxing the soul, say to yourself words from the Scriptures which express peace and God's care. Among them use this verse from Isaiah. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee"

Most people suffer tension because they keep their minds stayed or fixed, not on God, but at the far lower level of their personal troubles and anxieties.

Repeat quietly to yourself other healing passages "Peace I give unto you. not as the world giveth, give I unto you Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" And again "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"

The words of old hymns are often helpful such as the line from "Lead, Kindly Light"—"So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it *still* will lead me on."

God has watched over you in the past He can be depended upon to do so now and in the future

As a result of this experience I quickly felt the desire for sleep. I was rested in body. Muscle and nerve relaxed. I was conscious of worries being lifted from the mind, and tension passing. There was a sense of peace deep within

This process is not intended merely to induce sleep, but is a formula which may be employed in the busiest part of the most active day. Nor is it escape from active responsibility. It increases the capacity for active work. Power is derived from quietness.

Edwin Markham has a wise line. "At the heart of the cyclone tearing the sky is a place of central calm." The cyclone derives its power from a calm centre So does a man. Out of relaxation comes driving energy. Power is generated in and derived from a calm centre

Practice will reduce the time needed for this exercise, until it will require only a moment. By such technique, modified or expanded to suit your own personality, you may find complete relaxation and learn to live without tension.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW TO THINK YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS

"WHERE do you get your successful ideas?" I asked a famous business man. We were in his library.

"Upstairs in a little room," he answered. "Would you like to see it?"

He led me to a small room furnished with only a table and two chairs Simple yet exquisite drapes hung at the windows On opposite walls were two pictures One showed the Matterhorn capped with snow; the other pictured a swiftly flowing, sun-speckled trout stream, rushing over smooth stones and into deep pools "Both pictures," he said, "represent peace. One portrays peace immovable, the other peace movable Both aspects are necessary to the proper contemplation of peace," he remarked.

On the table was a pad, several pencils and a Bible

"Here is where I get my ideas," he said

He explained that his method is to come home from his office well in advance of the dinner-hour and shut himself in this little room There his privacy is never disturbed. He seats himself in an easy-chair and consciously and deliberately relaxes his body. He does this by placing his feet firmly on the floor, raising his hands and letting them fall limply two or three times, saying as he does so "My arms are dead, my arms are dead" He does the same with

his feet, lifting them up and letting them drop. He also relaxes his eyelids by allowing them to fall a half-dozen times as inertly as possible. This technique, he said, is quite effective in eliminating strain.

Next he reads from the Bible, selecting passages dealing with quietness, serenity, peace of mind. He knows where to find these quickly and I noticed that they were underscored His favourite quotation is: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians ii. 5).

"It is possible," he asserted, "to experience the quality of mind Christ had and to possess to a degree His insights and clarity of understanding."

The next procedure is to write down the particular problem upon which he wanted insight It may be a business problem, or some personal matter, or a domestic quandary. Every factor pertaining to the problem is put down on paper. "Writing down an idea tends to clarify it," he declared. He quoted Themistocles "Speech is like the cloth of Arras opened and spread abroad, whereas in thought it lies as in packs." When he has put down on the paper everything he can think of in connection with the problem, he then studies and considers it, weighing and analysing it

The final procedure takes the form of a prayer somewhat as follows "God, I feel relaxed in body and in mind. My little mind is not big enough to understand the intricacies and ramifications of my problems. I have tried to study this problem. I now ask you, God, to give illumination, insight, and understanding that I may take the proper course"

Having done this, he said "I leave the room and put the problem out of my mind I then spend the evening reading or conversing with friends The answer may come in the midst of a conversation or I may be awakened in the night with the answer clearly in mind. Sometimes I may have to repeat this process several times, but," and he emphasised this with great earnestness, "whenever I have practised this method of thinking, the right answers to my problems always come. The answer has not always been what I expected or wanted, but the answer I have received has been the right one when judged by the ultimate results"

This man had discovered that the ultimate in the art of thinking is the spiritual touch. He had learned how to think creatively. His emotional, spiritual and intellectual

energies joined to deliver ideas that were sound and practical.

We need to cultivate practical techniques of thinking, for the power to think is one of our greatest faculties. Your life, or mine, is not determined by outward circumstances, but by the thoughts that habitually engage the mind. You create your own world by your thoughts It has been said· "A man is what he eats" A deeper truth is, a man is what he thinks. The wisest of all books says· "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" As a man thinks habitually in his conscious and subconscious mind, that is what he becomes.

Marcus Aurelius, wisest man of Rome, said: "Our life is what our thoughts make of it," Ralph Waldo Emerson, wisest American, said. "A man is what he thinks about all day long" Obviously a person thinks about many things in the course of a day. Beneath all these thoughts, however, is one basic or primary thought. Into this fundamental thought, all other thoughts are drained, and from it take their colour and content.

For example, some people allow fear to become their primary thought. Fear usually begins as a thin trickle of worry across the mind. Repeated over many days, it becomes habitual until it cuts a deep channel across the consciousness. Every thought a man to whom this has happened thinks—about his family, about his business, about his health, or about the world—is coloured by the basic and primary thought of fear and comes up tinctured with anxiety and insecurity No matter how he resists the persistent thought of fear, he cannot escape it He is what he thinks about all day long, he is a man of fear

To counteract this condition—substitute a different and stronger basic thought The only primary thought that can successfully oppose fear is faith or the positive thought. Only faith is stronger than fear.

But what is the technique for developing faith? It is to affirm the positive thought Faith, too, begins as a thin trickle across the mind. Repeated, it becomes habitual It cuts deeply into the consciousness until finally (to use a crude figure) you have two basic channels of thought—one of fear, and one of faith But fear can never defeat faith. As you deepen the channel of the faith thought, the channel of the fear thought finally dries up. The faith thought overflows and becomes the deep, flowing, primary thought of

the mind. Then every thought you think about yourself, about the future, about your business, about your family, about the world is touched by the thought of faith and comes up bright, resplendent, optimistic and positive.

As a result of your new and positive caste of thought, you will learn to believe in yourself, in your country, and in the future of mankind. You will now have a deep, positive conviction that life is good. Shadows which once frightened you and obstacles which once defeated you flee away and are overcome Physically you may be the same person, but mentally you are living in a different world. Actually you are a different person because you are thinking differently. You are what you think about all day long. But your thoughts now give you power and are leading you to happiness and success.

A thought, properly employed, possesses a healing property. Physicians to-day are emphasising "psycho-somatic" medicine, psycho—of the mind, and soma—of the body. They study the effect of thought or emotion upon physical states For emphasis, a physician once said that he would have little trouble in getting most of his patients well if only he could cut off their heads during convalescence. And, in fact, chemical and organic conditions would frequently adjust themselves were it not for the effect of improper thinking. I would argue that every individual should have a regular check-up on his thought processes A wise man has bodily check-ups to keep himself in physical health. Why not check-ups for mental health? The mind is surely as important, if not more so, than the body, for the body is largely regulated by the mind Get your mind checked up

The Church may serve as a kind of re-conditioning centre where a person can submit his mind for an overhauling and get it put back into order. Contrary to a popular misconception, psychiatry does not deal with pathological cases, but may be defined as a science which helps to keep normal people normal. The cure is often effected by the simple application of spiritual and psychiatric treatment

A New York City business man came to our church clinic. He was a successful man holding a rather important position. By an extraordinary summoning of his energies, he was able to keep going His expenditure of nervous energy was immense. He felt depleted in energy and had little strength and no zest His mind was haunted by interlocking obsessions

"What do I need?" he asked.

"Mental conditioning," I replied.

"What is mental conditioning?" he asked in some surprise.

"It is a process to freshen up the mind," I explained.

He told me that he was "no good until eleven o'clock in the morning". "I have an awfully hard time getting up, and when I do, I am disagreeable and unhappy until about eleven. Then I manage to perk up and do pretty well for a few hours."

"What time do you get up?" I asked.

"Around nine. I have a wonderful wife. She serves my breakfast in bed."

"Now isn't that sweet?" I said. "She comes in and says consolingly 'How are you, sweetheart?' doesn't she?"

"Yes," he said; "how did you know?"

"And what do you do? You groan: 'Oh, I feel so terrible!' Then she puts her soft hands lightly on your brow, and says: 'That's all right, sweetheart, you just lie there and I will bring you up some breakfast.'"

"Yes, that's what she does. Isn't that wonderful?"

"You haven't a wife. She is acting like a mother, babying you," I said.

"The doctor says there is nothing wrong with me except my mind," he continued. "He says I'm a victim of self-pity as a result of wrong thinking."

"Your doctor is right," I said. "You need to have your mind re-conditioned. I suggest that you pray and ask for strength—then believe that strength is being given you. To-morrow morning when your wife comes into your room and asks how you are, give her a crisp, healthy answer. Say to her 'I feel new strength—through God's help I know I'm all right.' Then get out of bed and go singing in to shave."

"She would die of a heart attack," he said.

"Get downstairs," I continued, "and eat breakfast at the table. Get started to your office by nine o'clock." I thought it ought to be eight-thirty, but I didn't want to be too hard on him.

"That wears me out to think about it," he said.

"It's your thoughts that wear you out," I explained. "But you won't be tired if you conceive of God's energy as being yours."

I did not see him for quite a while. Then one day I met him on the street.

"Do you remember that mental conditioning business you told me about?" he asked. "Well, all the way down the street that day I thought 'That man Peale is a fool. Mental conditioning—affirming I feel fine, of all the crackbrained notions' Then I got to thinking maybe I really was not as bad off as I had been assuming. A few mornings later I was certain I felt better and decided to try out your suggestion. My wife came in and said 'How are you?' 'Fine,' I answered, 'marvellous!' I leaped out of bed, swept her off her feet, kissed her and set her down hard, and went singing in to shave You never saw such an expression on anybody's face And—I had a good day and have been practising your idea ever since. When a negative thought tries to sneak into my mind, I affirm that God is flooding my mind with peace and strength. I have found that when you affirm it, you have gone a long way towards having it."

People develop defeatist habits of thought which make them miserable. Their happiness is frustrated by their thinking. Things will be different when you think differently. When depressing thoughts come to mind, literally say. "You old, depressing defeat thought—get out of my mind. I can defeat you. I affirm that God's strength is in me" Actually talk back to your thoughts At all costs conquer defeatist thinking, otherwise it will conquer you

Get your mind renewed and life will be different!

An industrialist discovered the truth of this. He underwent a physical examination and the doctor said "There is nothing wrong with you that cannot be cured by a new mental outlook on life" He charged plenty for this prescription and well he should, for it was sound advice The industrialist went to his minister He got his thinking changed—got the worry and fear thoughts out Rid of the thoughts that were poisoning his mind, he is now a new man. He learned to think his way to success and happiness

• • •

It is very important to keep the thought processes in good condition, for in your mind are all the paraphernalia needed to build your career. Keep your mind free from confusion and all the creative ideas you need will be yours Your mind will deliver them to you if you keep your intellectual equipment well regulated

An important factor in the achievement of success is the art of original and creative thinking The average person

does not trust his own mind to create for him the ideas which he needs. Business firms are beginning to realise the importance of creative thinking and in some instances have actually employed men for the sole purpose of thinking. They are not research men, but thinking men. Their job is to study the business, fill their minds full of it and then trust their minds to deliver fresh and creative ideas.

Dr. Glenn Clark quotes the late Arthur Brisbane to the effect that there are many firms which will pay large salaries for thinking creative thoughts. These jobs go begging, he says.

It is said that John D. Rockefeller, Sen., once employed a man at a very high salary whose job was to sit in a swivel chair and think up new ideas for the business. A jealous person complained to Mr. Rockefeller: "Why do you pay that fellow so much for swivelling around in a swivel chair and staring out of the window?" Mr. Rockefeller said: "If you can think up as many good ideas as he does, I will give you the same and a swivel chair." Do not conclude, however, from this incident that every man who swivels around in a swivel chair is worth a large salary. Many are merely engaging in intellectual free wheeling.

May I at this point inject a homely parable? A man was hard pressed for money and he prayed and asked the Lord to give him some. The Lord, in His kindliness, heard the prayer coming up from earth and called one of His angels and said: "That poor fellow needs money. Send some down to him."

The angel returned and said: "Lord, I have looked through the vaults of heaven and can find no money. We have only that which 'neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal,' but while we have no money, we have some wonderful ideas and insights. Shall we send some of those down to him?"

The man had continued to pray and he showed great faith and the Lord was delighted and said: "Yes, open the windows of heaven and pour out so many insights and ideas that he will have more than he needs."

And so it happened that everybody said: "What a creative, ingenious, resourceful mind this man possesses." This parable is as sound as the good earth on which we walk.

If you do honest and thorough intellectual work, the next step is to relax your mind, trusting it to sort the material and deliver insights and solutions to problems. The best

kind of thinking is that which is done unconsciously after conscientious study and preparation Professor Brand Blanshard, professor of philosophy at Yale, and former President of the American Philosophical Association, tells us that great writers employed the art of unconscious thinking. He describes the method of several.

"Stevenson, when he had a story to write, would block out the plot and then leave the detail to his 'Brownies', the little people who worked during sleep in the hidden places of his mind Henry James has described how, in writing *The American*, he took his main idea and 'dropped it for the time into the deep well of unconscious cerebration', where it went on to take form and substance. Milton, for long periods, would brood over a theme and write nothing. But during these 'droughts', as he called them, the springs were forming beneath the surface and suddenly, in the middle of the night sometimes, he would call for his daughters to catch, from dictation, the torrent of verse that came welling up. People used to wonder at the pulpit fertility of Beecher; he once preached daily for eighteen months without missing a day, and his sermons were powerful ones But he has left it on record that the work was largely unconscious He kept a number of themes ripening at once in the cellars of his mind; a week or so before the sermon was due, he would select one that was well along, consider it a while intently, then commit it again to the cellar. On the morning of delivery he would find that it had germinated into a large mass of relevant ideas which he would then order and put down at tremendous speed

"Nor is it only in art and letters that unconscious thinking has been used, it has solved some of the knottiest problems of the sciences.

"Thus Gauss had been working on a theorem in arithmetic for four years, after which 'as a sudden flash of light the enigma was solved' But he explicitly adds that he was unable to see the thread he must have followed in reaching this end result

" 'I have found,' says Bertrand Russell, 'that if I have to write upon some rather difficult topic, the best plan is to think about it with very great intensity—the greatest intensity of which I am capable—for a few hours or days, and at the end of that time give orders, so to speak, that the work is to proceed underground." *

* Brand Blanshard, *The American Mercury*, December, 1945, p 693

"Ruml doesn't proceed from premise to conclusion or follow any known logical method in inventing his plans. He doesn't seem to hear voices or receive messages. His faculty is usually described as clairvoyance or intuition, two unsatisfactory words which fail to throw much light on what actually goes on in his mind." *

In one industry a "silent room" has been set aside for executives where without books or other paraphernalia they may have solitude to practise the art of creative thinking.

Dr. Frederick Kettner, authority on youth training, considers the practice of creative silence a vital part of education. Silence brings about remarkable changes in young people. He makes the unique suggestion that the architecture in the modern age should include a "silence" room in each home where man can figuratively wash his brain and heart. Many modern homes include a "rumpus" room, primarily intended for the children. Judging from current domestic situations, it would seem that there are altogether too many "rumpus" rooms in homes. We need more "silence" rooms.

A successful sales manager says it isn't necessary to have a room in which you may go apart, one may practise the art of retirement into mental quietness even in the midst of confusion

His method is to remove his glasses and put his hands over his eyes for a half-minute In this half-minute he deliberately thinks of a peaceful scene, such as the place he fished last summer, or a mountain view. Having allowed this picture to flash into his mind, he then says quietly to himself the following words, repeating the sentence several times "Peace is flooding my mind, my body, and my soul." He declares that he feels peace flowing in upon him by the act of conceiving it as doing so He turns to his work with the feeling that a refreshing of his thought processes has taken place Dullness and haziness lift and energy and new perceptions are given him

An outstanding investment banker in New York told me that he considers the reading of the Bible the most valuable method of clarifying and stimulating his mind. He goes to his office in the financial district at seven-thirty in the morning and spends the first half-hour reading the Bible He then has fifteen minutes of quiet meditation, after which he says he is ready for the day's work. He is an accomplished

* Alva Johnston, *The New Yorker*, February 10, 1945

linguist and some days reads the Bible in French, other times in Spanish, claiming that the different emphases given by these languages add to his insights.

Recently he went to another city on an important banking mission. For two hours of his journey he studied business reports affecting the negotiations For the next hour, he said· "I read St. Paul—mark you, not merely for spiritual values, but primarily for the stimulation of my mental processes. Finally I had fifteen minutes of relaxing prayer and meditation, after which I went to sleep. Upon arrival at my destination, I did not try to sell the people anything they did not want or need I merely laid all the facts before them as I had thought them out. I then returned to New York Two days later I had on my desk a large amount of business." Had no financial results materialised he would have been satisfied with the knowledge that he had done all within his power.

"You really think that this practice has clarified your thinking?" I asked

"I do not think it, I *know* it," he answered firmly.

CHAPTER SIX

PRAYER—THE MOST POWERFUL FORM OF ENERGY

EARLY one morning I arrived at the Grand Central Station in New York and took a taxi to my home. The driver proved to be a very happy and friendly man

"You're up bright and early this morning," I commented

"Oh!" he replied, "I am here every morning at this time, that is, every morning except Sunday."

"And what do you do on Sunday?" I asked

"Why, what do you suppose?" he replied. "I go to church" He stopped for a traffic light "That isn't the whole of it," he said. "I sing in the choir also. I like the old hymns, don't you?"

Upon my agreement, he suddenly offered· "Would you like me to sing a hymn for you?"

This was astonishing, but one learns to expect almost anything in New York, so I said "Yes, I would like to hear you sing" At this he broke into one of the old hymns, which he sang in a clear tenor voice as we rolled down Fifth Avenue

When he had finished I complimented him, and then asked: "Have you a good minister in your church?"

"A good minister!" he exclaimed. "We have the best in New York, and I don't mean maybe!"

This pleased me, for I always like to meet a man who is enthusiastic about his minister. Just then he went past my own church at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street.

"There is where I go to church," I told him.

"Is that so?" he replied. "Do you have a good minister there?"

"Well,' I said, "only so-so, you see, I happen to be the minister myself"

This unexpected information nearly caused him to run up on the sidewalk

"I guess I took in too much territory back there," he said.

When we arrived at my home we chatted for a minute.

"I'll tell you why my minister means so much to me," he said. "I haven't always been a taxi-driver. I had a good business once, but it went down in the depression. I knew that God had a plan for me, and He didn't fail me. My minister got me into the taxi business. He said. 'Bill, running a taxi is the same as operating any business. If you give good service, if you are friendly, if you treat people right and trust in God, you will get along, and you'll have a good time doing it.'

"My minister told me that every morning when I went over to the garage to get my cab, *before I started out*, I was to bow my head over the wheel and dedicate my day's work to God and to people That may sound pious, but I want to tell you that I have made a good living. What's more, I have had a wonderful time, and I am very happy, happier than I have ever been before"

I say without qualification that here was a man who combined good business practices with his religion, and was a success in life. I haven't the slightest doubt that this man has by now gone on to greater things, because he has the philosophy that works. trust God, work hard, put your business in God's hands, and serve people

This taxi-driver utilised a procedure which one of the world's foremost scientists, Alexis Carrel, highly recommended He said. "The most powerful form of energy one can generate is prayer. Prayer, like radium," he continued, "is a luminous and self-generating form of energy."

Alexis Carrel, whose political aberration does not vitiate his scientific knowledge, made that astounding statement to a generation that is perfectly familiar with power in its most dramatic forms. Yet, points out this scientist, the most powerful form of energy one can generate is not mechanical, electronic or even atomic energy, but prayer energy.

Most of us are novices in prayer. Many seldom pray, some do not pray at all. There are, generally speaking, three ways in which men get what they want and need (1) By work, (2) by thought, (3) by prayer. The first two are used every day. The third is greatly neglected

Why? Probably because work and thought are obvious factors of our everyday experience. They are common, everyday things, while prayer is associated with something different, with special forms and postures It has been made a sort of Sunday-go-to-meeting thing remote from our daily lives

This elimination of the prayer factor from man's experience is a tragic omission. It compels us to bear the entire weight and burden of life Little wonder men break down, or fail to achieve the best possible Through spiritual procedures we may make contact with a tremendous source of strength. Greater strength may be generated by prayer than by the thoughts of the brain or the working of the hands Let me repeat the most powerful form of energy one can generate is prayer energy.

The connection between men and the universe may be far more subtle and profound than we may think. We are part of nature and of God, and to succeed truly in life one must harmonise himself with nature and God.

A brilliant woman recovered from a long and serious illness and went to Florida to recuperate. She went to Daytona Beach, one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. During her convalescence it was her custom daily to lie on the beach to get the sun. No one was near her Alone in the midst of nature, she practised deliberately turning her mind towards God. She prayed deeply

One day she became acutely conscious of the deep silence of nature. She felt strangely attuned to the world. The quietness was such that to her astonishment she could actually hear her own heart beat. She began to count those beats. She noticed the rhythm, steady and undeviating. She was listening to the beating of her own heart as it sent the life-blood coursing through her body.

As she lay listening to her heart beat, she turned her eyes and looked through the beach grass near her, washed clean and fresh by the tides. Her eyes selected one particular blade of beach grass. She watched as it was moved slowly and gracefully to and fro by a gentle breeze. She was amazed to discover that it moved with virtually the same rhythm and beat as her heart.

Then her eyes lifted to the sea. Sprinkled with sunshine like myriads of diamonds, sparkling in the sunlight, it rolled majestically inward in long foamy curlers upon the clean sand. Her mind suddenly became alive to the amazing fact that the beating of the waves upon the beach was also in a rhythm not dissimilar to the waving of the grass and the beating of her heart She became aware of one fundamental rhythmic harmony. Then came a realisation that she was at one with nature, that she was a constituent part of its inner harmony. This thought caused all loneliness and fear to leave her mind Now she knew that she was in tune with God, that God's healing forces were flowing through her, bringing back bodily health. This brought a deep peace and feeling of renewal

"I shall never be afraid of anything again," she declared. "For now I know there is a power by which life can be re-created. I know the secret of attuning to that power." It is a medium through which the close connection of man to God is achieved.

. . . .

To be efficient in prayer you must learn the art of praying It is a mistake to think that the laws of efficiency do not apply to prayer Obviously skills are required in the operation of all power. It is not reasonable to assume that no skill is required in the exercise of the greatest power of all. Yet in mastering the art of prayer it is only necessary to follow certain simple principles. You do not have to go to college or technical school to become an expert in this field.

The first step in learning to pray is just to pray. You can read every book ever written about prayer, and you can attend innumerable discussions on prayer, but still the only way to learn to pray is to pray.

As a young man I took lessons in public speaking. Some time later I met one of the greatest orators of that period and asked him "How does one become proficient as a public speaker?"

"By speaking," he replied. "Learn the art by practice. Speak every time you get a chance. Keep doing it. Keep practising constantly, seeking to improve yourself."

That advice applies to all efficiency. It is important to study the rules and techniques of anything you want to master, but in the last analysis you learn by doing.

How much time each day do you spend in prayer? I have asked that question of many people and have arrived at the conclusion that about five minutes per day is the probable average. Some pray more than that, some less—most people probably less.

Let us try a little arithmetic. The average person is awake about sixteen hours a day That means he has 960 minutes at his disposal If he uses only five minutes to pray, it means that he is praying only one half of one per cent of his waking hours There was a time during prohibition days when according to an Act of Congress one half of one per cent of alcohol in a beverage was legally declared to be non-intoxicating This percentage is non-intoxicating in religion also. Raise the daily percentage of time you spend in prayer if you expect to experience its power.

Again I quote Alexis Carrel: "When we pray we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that binds the universe Pray everywhere; in the street, in the Tube, in the office, the shop, the school, as well as in the solitude of one's own room or in a church True prayer is a way of life. To-day as never before prayer is a binding necessity in the lives of men and nations."

A practical plan is to practise utilising spare moments that would otherwise be aimless I know a young woman who lives in Brooklyn and works in Manhattan. She formerly spent the fifteen minutes required for the underground journey by just sitting and staring at the advertisements around the car. Then one day she hit upon the expedient of closing her eyes and reciting quietly to herself the Lord's Prayer and a few verses of scripture She would pray about her work for that day and also pray for various people. Having a rather witty way of expression, she told me that the distance between her home and her office was "three Lord's Prayers and three Twenty-third Psalms". Thus she gets in thirty minutes of prayer each day on the Tube. Out of these thirty minutes during which she formerly reshuffled her worries, she now draws inspiration for a singularly happy and useful life

My friend, Frank Laubach, a famous educator, utilises time spent in a bus to pray for his fellow passengers. He fixes his eye on each one in turn and prays for him or her. People who know him have commented on the amazing manner in which this radiation of love and goodwill changes the atmosphere of a bus Laubach picturesquely says he just sits in a bus and "swishes love all over the place". One day a sour-faced man sitting in front of him to whom he had said nothing suddenly turned round and growled: "What this country needs is a religious revival" Apparently this kind of praying is contagious If you do no more than make some of your otherwise aimless minutes prayer minutes you will soon notice new strength and joy welling up within you

Prayer responds to law as does any science. Learn these laws and practise them and you will inevitably get a definite result One of the primary laws of prayer is simplicity. Make your prayers simple and natural It is not necessary to use stereotyped phrases and words. Talk to God as to a friend

I learned a great deal about prayer from my grandmother She lived in a little town in the Mid-West, in an old-fashioned house, typical of that region. There was a romance about the old-fashioned house. My grandmother's heating plant was a good burning stove One side of you was warm and the other side freezing. Never in her lifetime did she have modern refrigeration. Her butter and eggs were placed in a crock outside the door. She was a strong, simple, old-fashioned woman.

My brother and I used to spend our summers with her She took us over from our parents After supper (dinner was the noon-day meal in those days) she would read to us by a kerosene lamp Her concave lenses sat rather far down on her nose as she read stories to us

Then she would take us upstairs to bed. It was a great high-posted bed laid with hand-made quilts, and had an old-fashioned feather-bed mattress in which we would sink so far that only our ears protruded. She would put the lamp on a stand and kneel by our bed. On her knees she would talk to the Lord, as to one with whom she was well acquainted and—as I see it now—to reassure us

"O Lord," so her prayer ran, "I hate to put these two little fellows away off here in this bedroom When I take this light away it is going to be very dark, and they are so little. They may be scared, but they do not need to be,

because You are here and You are going to watch over them all through the night. You will watch over them all their life long too, if they are good boys. Now, Lord, I ask You to watch over the pillows of these little fellows this night"

Then she would take the lamp, the glow fading upon the wall as she passed from the room. Her soft footfalls died away as she passed down the steps On stormy nights, especially when the wind would howl around the house, my brother and I would huddle together in that big bed. I used to look up in the darkness and in imagination see a great, kindly face looking down on my pillow. I have always thought there was something magnificent about that prayer· "Look down upon the pillow of these little fellows."

My grandmother said: "Remember, God is not some oriental potentate sitting upon a throne; He is your friend; He is right by your side Talk to Him in simple, plain language, telling Him what is on your heart, and He will listen to you."

Make your prayers simple. If you are sitting at your desk and you do not know what to do about some matter, do not call your partner, because he may not know, either; but call in a greater Partner Merely say. "Lord, I am stuck with this business problem. You know more about this business than I do; tell me what to do." If your fears and anxieties are heavy, talk to God about them in simple fashion Then do your best and leave the rest to Him. Quit worrying about things. God's love will protect and defend you. Trust Him, work hard, think straight, and things will come right.

In learning this art we need to recognise that prayer is a very simple thing. We have, perhaps, made it too stilted and formal. A professor under whom I studied was one of the most God-like men I ever knew. I learned much about prayer from him. I liked to hear him pray in college chapel. When he prayed I surreptitiously watched him. His lifted face lighted up—an outward reflection of an inner light. His hair, what there was of it, was snowy white. To his students, he was a human and practical saint whom we loved. Though now he is gone, we who studied under him shall never forget him. His name was Reverend Doctor George H. Butters, D.D., Ph D., LL D , but to his students he was "Daddy" Butters. Even in the class-room we sometimes called him "Daddy", but he never minded that

He used to tell us that he had a difficult time with his wife in the matter of prayers It seems that his wife was what he

called a "rigid Christian", who believed that the only way to say one's prayers at night was to kneel down by the bedside. Sometimes it got very cold in the New England town where he lived, and his wife was a fresh air enthusiast! When bedtime came, the wind would be whistling through the room, impelling one to get ready for bed in a hurry. Mrs. Butters throve on the cold, and when she discovered that her husband had crept into bed, she would quietly, but firmly ask: "George, have you said your prayers?"

"No, my dear," would come the meek reply. "I am saying them in bed."

"George, you get out of bed and say your prayers in a proper manner."

Obediently but painfully, he would slip out of bed, down to the cold floor, the cold wind whipping across his bare feet.

"On those occasions," he commented, "my prayers were short and to the point."

I remember his telling this in one of the most dignified churches in the city of Boston, to the delight of a distinguished congregation; real people always like a human being for a preacher. To "Daddy" Butters, God was a friend. God was with him when he sat down to lunch. He was with him at his desk, in his office, when he rode on the train—He was with him everywhere. He talked about God as we would talk about a good friend. His entire cast of mind was that of one who lived with God. Life to him was itself a prayer. But he was never a kill-joy. I think of him as one of the happiest, most genuine, down-to-earth human beings I ever knew.

People who have this simple contact with God have power. No matter how much difficulty, hardship, pain, tragedy and futility may come to them, they rise above it magnificently.

It cannot be over-emphasised that an important technique of prayer is to do all you can, then leave it to God. Put your hand to your problem with force and vigour, fully utilising your own brain and effort; then put it into God's hands through prayer. A prominent New York physician recently told me that while this idea sounds simple, it contains a very profound and vital truth. He found this out from a critical experience, for he was taken ill and had to undergo a very serious operation. As a physician, he knew that the mortality rate for this particular operation was alarmingly high, that the chances for coming through were

slight indeed. Naturally this realisation caused him to be very greatly disquieted. His professional career was at the peak. He wanted to live.

He decided to practise prayer. He had secured the best scientific earthly help obtainable. Having done all that he could possibly do, he then simply put the matter in God's hands. He calmly rested himself upon God's will and wisdom. He told the Lord he did not want to die, that he wanted to live. He told the Lord that he had the best doctors available; that now, having done all that any human being could do, he was willing to leave the outcome to Him. However God wanted it to be, he was willing to accept.

He reports that immediately a sense of peace came into his mind and with it confidence. He said he felt inwardly that it would be all right, however it turned out. He went into the operation with every human and divine force, free and unimpeded. He regained his health, and to-day is back at work every day, performing one of the most difficult and skilful operations known to the medical profession.

A business man in New York learned by practice the value of prayer in his business activity. "In the morning," he says, "I am usually the first to reach my office. I ask God to guide my efforts during the day, and I thank Him in advance for answers to my prayer. Before starting out to interview prospective customers it is my practice to pray by name for each man. I do not pray that I may make a sale, for emphasis upon self-interest tends to break the circuit. It would be dictating to God, who may not want a sale made on that particular visit, or on any other visit, for that matter. I merely pray for my customer as a person and ask that God may bless him in all his problems.

"The result," he continued, "is that I meet my customers in an atmosphere of friendliness and confidence. I have often noted that we are strangely attuned. Moreover, I have been privileged to help people whom otherwise I would never have contacted. This procedure lifts business above money-making to the plane of human understanding. Of course, it results ultimately in material blessings, not through any mysterious process, but simply by being right with God and man. I am able to keep calm and handle each problem as it arises, and in strange ways overcome difficulties which in former years would have floored me completely." Let us turn from this successful business man to a San Francisco woman who was in despair.

By accident this woman heard a radio talk by the author—a talk dealing with the simple and practical techniques of prayer. She wrote as follows:

This is my story—as briefly as I can put it—a big story to put in a few words.

In the summer of 1943, one afternoon I turned on the radio—something I seldom if ever do during the day. My next impulse was to turn it off, when a sentence caught my ear. I waited for the next sentence and so on, till I found myself sitting down by the radio and listening.

I always called myself a Christian, prayed, etc., but for the first time in my life something happened. That afternoon I first heard you, I was in the depths of despair. Things were going from bad to worse until it seemed involuntary bankruptcy was confronting me. Real estate salesmen seemed powerless. From that very afternoon I got a new grip—a new way of praying, I guess. I feel I was led, literally led, step by step to the office door of a woman broker across the Bay, whom I had never even heard of before. She took hold of the properties with vigour, even developed new qualities in them. It would take pages and pages to give you the story.

But, and here is the next great step. I have always had a desire to make designs. I talked very hard to God—asked Him to show me definitely what to do. I received word that a two-yard drapery length of mine which I had sent to an International Textile Exhibition had received the first award. This has led to wonderful contacts with some of the best and most reliable firms. They wanted my designs. I am relating all this modestly, with reserve and deep sincere thanks to Our Lord and Father. It is a sample of the way the impossible becomes possible when God is the partner.

People who practise the simple techniques of prayer secure guidance to an unusual degree. They are directed in their activities and contacts by an invisible but definite power. In meeting situations and in dealing with people, they acquire remarkable skill. I do not, of course, believe that there is anything magical in prayer, but from my experience I do feel certain that insights, leads, and illuminations are given to people who habitually practise an attitude of prayer, in which they become amenable to divine guidance. I have seen enough indications of the validity

of this statement that I accept it as a scientific injunction, to wit Yield your mind with its problems to an attitude of prayer. Be willing to accept not what you want or what you think ought to be, but affirm that you will be led in the solution of your problem. The result will be that over a period of time you will clearly see the outlines of a pattern which you, yourself, did not conceive

John G Ramsay, Public Relations Representative of the United Steel Workers of America (C I.O.), told me about a mutual acquaintance who spends one hour each day in prayer. Ramsay smiled and said "I could not do that I get enough suggestions from God in two minutes to keep me busy all day long" John Ramsay says that he gets guidance and direction for his daily work from these two minutes of prayer. Here is an example he relates.

"Some months ago I sat down at a table for four in a dining-car. Three other men were already seated; as I later discovered, none was acquainted with the other. They all seemed gloomy and depressed As I do not like to eat a meal in such an atmosphere, I began a conversation which I hoped would lift their spirits. Soon we were talking animatedly—mostly about religion.

"After we finished dinner, one said to me· 'I'd like to talk with you for a few minutes.'

" 'Certainly,' I replied, 'let's go into the lounge-car.'

"The Lord must have wanted this conversation to be held, for even though the train was crowded, two seats, side by side, awaited us. My new companion told me that when he left home as a boy, his father enjoined him never to allow more than ten minutes to elapse upon a train before talking to the nearest person about his religious life.

" 'On my first train ride,' he said, 'I was seated next to a burly fellow. I kept my eye upon my watch until ten minutes had passed; then, scared to death, I blurted out: 'Are you saved?' I got the rough answer you might expect, and for twenty years I have never spoken to another man about religion

" 'To-day,' he continued, 'you got three men, none of whom had met the other, to talk about religion naturally and interestingly in a couple of minutes. What's your technique?'

"We chatted for some time and, as he rose to leave, he introduced himself as vice-president of a certain steel company; then he asked me my name and business.

"I am John Ramsay, I replied. I am an organiser for the United Steel Workers of America, and it is my job to organise the employees of your company.

"Despite differences in point of view, we established fellowship and understanding based upon our common religious faith. I have never thought much about my 'technique', except that it is to try to live a God-centred life."

This book emphasises scientific spiritual principles which have been demonstrated in the laboratory of personal experience Principles of guidance, of prayer, of faith, of simple trust, of relaxation, are presented not as theory, but as the Q E.D. of actual test Everything in this book is factual

Whatever your problem, no matter how difficult, you can release spiritual power sufficient to solve your problem. The secret is—*pray* and *believe.* Even though it may be hard to believe, do it nevertheless. Simply believe that Almighty God will give His power to you. Pray and mentally yield yourself to God's power. Do this by affirming that you have not sufficient power within yourself and that, therefore, you are willing to put yourself completely in contact with spiritual force The basic secret of the Christian religion is not effort or will-power, important as they are The secret of Christianity is faith. The only struggle it urges you to exert is the effort to believe. The art is to learn to have faith. When you have done so you become a channel through which divine power flows. It flows through *you.* You then have all the strength you need to meet any situation involving you.

As an illustration, here is the personal experience of a man who was "through" From brilliant success he plunged downward, then, at an age when many men retire, he came back. Here is a story that will thrill many—told in the man's own words

"For upwards of fifty years my life was like a song. Then, for four years I never smiled. I had a lovely wife, three fine sons and a beautiful home In business, mine was what people call a success story At forty-seven, I was a Lieutenant-Colonel in World War I, in charge of millions of dollars of supplies At fifty, I was president of a large oil company At fifty-eight, I was a close associate of one of Wall Street's leading figures. I was on top. Life was good,

and I believed that although trouble might come to others, it would not come to me—well, just because it couldn't

"Suddenly, all went wrong. I was one of the spectacular wrecks of the depression. I lost everything—my personal fortune, the home I loved, quickly followed by the death of my wife, my idyllic companion for thirty-three years. To climax all my troubles, I was taken with encephalitis, a form of the dread sleeping sickness

"After many weeks, I was pronounced cured, but there were scars in my emotional system.

"I was looked over by some of the best men in the medical profession, who said. 'Nothing is wrong with you' I knew there was but, as I look back now, I see that my trouble was not in their line. So I went from neurologist to neurologist, from osteopath to osteopath, from diet faddist to diet faddist. Steadily I lost weight, gained in irritability and became more and more of a trial to my family and friends.

"When I returned to business I got no better, I became a neurasthenic and a hypochondriac of the worst sort. Nothing that anyone said to me that could have been helpful, made the slightest impression. I thought constantly of my troubles, which I sought to unload upon other people. In street-cars I told my woes to anyone who would listen—friend or stranger.

" 'John,' said a friend to me, after I found a new life, 'do you remember an afternoon when I rode up-town with you on the Tube? You talked all the way about your illness and your troubles. Finally, I told you I had an engagement, and left the train at Fourteenth Street, just to get away from you'

"I know now, but didn't then, what a pest I was The way I carried on, I was the only man in the world who had any troubles I was resentful and venomous, and I cursed everything in general. Each morning, upon waking, I asked myself· 'How in the name of God can I go through with another day?' I found myself hoping that some morning I wouldn't wake up One day I sat in a hotel lobby, a farewell letter in my hand, deliberating from ten in the morning until late afternoon whether to leap from a top-floor window I know now that my real trouble was not with my body but with my spirit.

"During this time I made two half-hearted ventures into realms of thought control and of religion They had helped others, but my faith was weak. My attitude was· 'Well,

God, I don't believe You can do anything about this situation, but let's see You try!"

"And to myself I said: 'This requires a miracle, and the days of miracles are past.' Nothing came of these ventures, of course, because there was no faith. But four years after I was stricken, the light of health and happiness dawned upon me in such a way that it could have been only God-directed.

"I was walking down a narrow street, carrying a cane which I used to think I needed, when I inadvertently struck a man who was passing me. Turning to apologise, I found him to be a genial person with an office in the same building with me He asked me to call, which I did I found him to be an ardent believer in the power of religious faith. He urged me to put my life in God's hands, to surrender all my troubles to Him and to practise thinking about God instead of myself

"I was taught to pray and to have faith. This was the turning point in my life.

"It was pointed out to me that my thinking was all wrong; that the first thing I had to do was clear out my mind. (As a man thinketh, so is he.) This is the stuff I cleaned out of my mind! Self-pity, ill-will, fears and other evils. No wonder I was sick. This was the first real mental catharsis I had ever known and it was effective because it was done on a spiritual basis, under the direction of an understanding man.

"After this mental cleansing, my friend began to feed my mind on simple, spiritual, wholesome food. I was given a course of reading lessons in spiritual truth. I was shown how to read the Bible. I discovered that the main part of the know-how is just to read it I purchased one of those Bibles in which the words of Jesus are marked and also I read the Psalms. After reading I would sit quietly, with the thought that these words were passing through my mind like medicine.

"This person also taught me how to use my mind positively rather than negatively. Instead of dwelling mentally upon my troubles, I learned to affirm, in my own mind, that God was helping me at that very minute. Gradually this idea took possession of me I found that one does become what he affirms he is when he does it in God's name.

"I practised living with Christ in my mind, often talking to Him as though He were right with me (I know He is). My mind was flooded with a healing sense of peace I felt

myself becoming a new man, fulfilling one of the greatest and truest of all Bible texts 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'

"This new-found power changed everything. I recovered gradually the zest I once had for work. A friend said to me. 'You are yourself again, it's a miracle!'

"Only God could have done this to me and shown the inner reservoirs of peace and strength which are in me now. Within a year God had helped me to become one of the big producers of my company. In succeeding years I have done an annual business of more than one-half million dollars I claim no credit for this—merely mention it to show what God can do. This may sound materialistic, but it isn't. I cite it only to show the return of strength and power inwardly.

"Some months ago I met the head doctor of one of the big psychiatric clinics I once attended He asked me how I was. 'Fine,' I replied 'I've found something which really helped me.' Then I told him of my recovery. 'Well,' he observed, 'we work along the same line, except for excluding the religious element'

"'Yes,' I told him, 'that's what's the trouble with it' Although the clinic was the last word in psychiatry, it was not until I found 'the religious element' that anything happened to me."

The man of this story discovered and put into practice the laws governing prayer and as a result was re-made

Now to sum up. Learn to pray correctly, scientifically. Employ tested and proven methods Avoid slipshod praying. To guard against perfunctory praying, here are ten rules for saying your prayers. They have proved to be an effective, workable discipline of prayer.

1. Set aside a few minutes to be alone and quiet. Relax body, mind and spirit by turning the thoughts away from problems and fixing the mind on God. Think about Him in the way that is most natural
2. Talk to God simply and naturally, telling Him anything that is on your mind. Do not think you have to use formal words and phrases. Talk to Him in your own language. He understands it.
3. Practise talking to God as you go about the business of the day. On the Tube or bus, or at your desk,

close your eyes for a moment to shut out the world and have a word or two with God. This will remind you of His presence and give you a sense of His nearness.

4. Affirm the fact that God is with you and helping you. That is to say, do not always beseech God for His blessings, but affirm the fact that He is now giving you His blessings.
5. Pray with the thought that your prayers reach out and surround your loved ones with God's love and care.
6. Think positive, not negative, thoughts when you pray.
7. Always state in your prayer that you are willing to accept God's will, whatever it is. Ask him for what you want, but express your willingness to take what He wants.
8. In your prayer simply put everything into God's hands. Pray for strength to do your best, and with confidence leave the rest to God.
9 Say a word of prayer for people who do not like you or have treated you badly. This will help them and release tremendous power in you.
10 At some time during every day say a word of prayer for this troubled world, for the nation and for a lasting peace.

Then—*believe* that your prayers will be answered. "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, *believe* that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

CHAPTER SEVEN

FORGET FAILURES AND GO AHEAD

One of the most important of all skills is that of forgetting. It is said that a man is what he thinks, or what he eats A man is also what he forgets

I am not straining to be paradoxical when I say that to be happy and successful you must cultivate the ability to say to yourself—forget it! It may not be easy, neither is it as hard as you think, but—one thing is certain, you must learn to forget.

Memory is one of the greatest of our faculties. The ability to retain information and experience is of vital importance. But it is a more subtle art to be able to cast out of the mind—or at least from a commanding place in it—failures, events, unhappy things that should be forgotten. It is a great skill to be able to be selective and say: "I will hold this in cherished memory. This other I shall cast from me." To be efficient, to be happy, to have full control of your powers, and to go ahead successfully, you must learn how to forget.

Anyone who deals with personality problems in an intimate way is bound soon to become aware of the importance of forgetting. In dealing with people one finds that their problems really centre around a few simple propositions—fear, guilt, selfishness, self-centredness and the inability to forget

I know a top executive who has risen by hard effort and marked ability to an important position, but he will not hold it unless he learns to forget. He is a man of considerable rigidity and wants everything to be just so. His wife died recently. He thinks of her as the finest person he ever knew. But she was rather carefree, while he was rigid.

Perhaps she wasn't quite as good a housekeeper as she might have been, and that annoyed him. Now she is gone and he remembers only his criticisms. He comes home at night and sadly says to himself: "I would willingly have everything out of place if only I had her back" He is haunted by remorse, by regret, by the memory of little complaints he made

I told him that where his wife is now, in the greatness and vastness of the eternal life, these little things do not matter. All that matters is the greatness of her love for him. If she could, she would tell him so. I warned him that if he does not learn to forget, then the heavy burden of regret will deteriorate him She lived her life She knew that he loved her . . . For this man the future of his life depends upon whether he can put these regrets in the past and go forward.

Repeatedly in personal counselling one encounters this tragic inability of people to forget. A curious case is that of a man who cannot write when he gets nervous When he goes to a hotel to register, his fingers refuse to function. He says that he deliberately goes to the end of the line so that everybody may register ahead of him. He does not want anybody to see him make "this awful signature", with fingers that do not function properly.

I suggested that he go to a hotel, get at the head of the line, and in a loud voice that everybody in the lobby could hear shout. "Gather 'round, gather 'round, see the worst signature in the United States." That might help free him from this crippling inhibition. To overcome the nervousness of his fingers, he must break a long line of memory that goes back to the past, to childhood.

When he was a small boy, his father suffered a muscular accident that destroyed the ability of his fingers to write The father became horribly self-conscious about it. He told the boy about it so often and so impressed it upon the boy's mind that although there was, of course, no organic injury to the boy's fingers, there was what amounted to an injury to the mind. Long memory reaches out and puts its inhibitions on the fingers of the boy, now a man It is a startling illustration of how a deeply held thought reaching far back in memory can render a man ineffective.

But it is necessary to develop skill in the art of forgetting. I have emphasised that the Bible is the wisest of all books. The Bible contains the formula for forgetting "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark . . ." (Philippians iii. 13–14). This formula contains the secret of how to forget and go ahead

"This one thing I do." The man who said this was resolutely disciplining his thoughts and controlling them. At the precise minute a man determines to control his thoughts, he is on the way to self-mastery. Usually our thoughts control us. The first step in forgetting is the simple determination to forget, to turn your back on something by reaching out to the things that lie ahead. Practise that thought pattern and you can break the hold of unhappy memory.

Mrs Peale was at a meeting out on the plains of the West, representing one of the denominational boards of our church of which she was president. People came from miles around to this meeting, and all stayed for a church dinner There had been a drought and much privation among the farmers of the plains She sat across the table from a hard-bitten, old North Dakota farmer—a shy man with big, rough hands She tried to interest him in conversation, but he did not respond.

So finally she asked him. "How are the crops this year?"

"The crops? Well, I guess there aren't any crops this year," he replied

She asked "How is that?"

"Well," he said, "first we had grasshoppers—they ate up nearly everything. Then came a dust-storm that destroyed what was left. But I was lucky. I got in five per cent of my crop, but my brother, who lives near me, didn't get in anything."

The devastation was so awful that she sat awe-struck and finally asked: "How do you feel about that?"

"Oh," said he, "I don't think about it any more. You see —I aimed to forget it."

This farmer had not enjoyed the benefit of the schools or other advantages, but for years he had gone to a little church on the plains. The winds swept against it, the snow piled deep around it in winter. It was seared by the heat of the summer, and the rains of the spring and the autumn beat against it. It had rough, wooden benches and old worn hymn-books, but there he heard some very wise words: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, I press towards the mark." The old man had found it a solid philosophy in disciplining the mind. He "aimed to forget". He may have lost that one crop, but he saved himself

Of course, some people can do that by force of will, but most people are not endowed with any tremendous power of will. It is very difficult to eject a thought by merely saying: "Be gone." Often such an attempt only tends to fix a thought more firmly in the mind. One must be more subtle The secret is to substitute thoughts. *Expel one thought by substituting a more powerful thought.*

I have had some interesting correspondence with a doctor in the mid-West. He uses his religion soundly and skilfully in the practice of medicine. He told me about the ailments of some of his patients (no names, of course) and asked: "As a spiritual doctor, what would you prescribe in these various cases?"

He has one patient whose employer was unjust to him and dishonest as well The doctor is satisfied that the facts are true and that the employer is as represented—cruel, unkind, dishonest, although he stays within the limits of legality. As a result of his ill-will towards the employer, the patient developed a peptic ulcer. The doctor says the ulcer is primarily caused by his disturbed state of mind. The hate thoughts, the revenge thoughts, the ill-will thoughts have made him sick.

He says "The problem is to change the patient's thoughts if the ulcer is to be cured" The patient must change his thinking about his employer. He must stop secreting the poison of resentment. I cited the case of another man who became miserable through being resentful of people. One day he was reading the Bible and saw the statement. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." "Well," he said, "if the Lord is willing to bother about these resentments, I will let him take care of this man who has mistreated me. The minute I shifted the responsibility of getting even with the fellow over to the Lord, and off my shoulders, I felt a hundred per cent better."

The Lord, in due time, will indeed "take care" of the person who has mistreated you. Why not follow this good advice and let God handle the matter? Do not waste your time in carrying thoughts of ill-will towards somebody, because those thoughts do not hurt that somebody, they hurt only you. They may give you peptic ulcers.

Often-times a person will agitate you in order to annoy you. Knowing that you are annoyed, he is happy or at least thinks he is. I advised the doctor that he suggest to his patient this idea about mentally shifting the responsibility of resentment over to God I suggested further that he persuade his patient to try the most subtle form of retaliation —namely, that he pray for the man who had mistreated him and thus set spiritual forces flowing back towards him; in short, conquer him by love. This is the most scientific of all reactions to an ill-will situation As you affirm good-will towards an enemy your mind will tend to forget and so gain relief. Shift the emphasis of the mind and master the art of forgetting.

Long-held grudges, deep-seated hates, form impenetrable obstacles to the flow of power through a personality. It is difficult to eliminate ill-will with its poisonous effects from the mind by merely being willing to do so. It is not quite that simple in the case of an habitual mental attitude.

The secret, as indicated, is to use a reverse method Try to pray for the person you do not like I realise that this may almost seem hypocritical, though it is not, but it is a method that will work. In so doing, you are setting against the corrosive effect of a grudge the only force more powerful than hate—namely, goodwill or love Long-established poisons secreted by ill-will are dissipated by the curative force of goodwill

Even the striving, however feebly, after an attitude of goodwill towards another person helps one to forget mistreatment. Many people are ruining their efficiency, making themselves miserable and in fact destroying any possibility of a happy future, simply because they will not forget insults, slights, or unfairness.

A man came to me with the complaint that "he simply had to get some peace inside of him". He could not sleep at night. He was nervous and tense He snapped at people. Naturally, everybody steered clear of him.

In our church clinic we went over his attitudes, his daily schedule, and his general practices of thought and action. All checked well except one thing. He had what amounted to almost a hatred for certain competitors in his particular business. It happened that most of these men were of another race and religion and there was some prejudice mixed up in the matter, but mostly it was merely personal conflict, jealousy, ill-will and unforgiveness.

I assured him he could be cured if he would follow the spiritual prescription I would give him He replied that he would follow it, but almost broke his promise when the prescription was outlined. "For the next two weeks," I said, "you are to pray twice a day for each of your competitors by name. You are not to pray for yourself at all during this period You are to pray that each of these men shall do a bigger business this year than you do"

"Why," he shouted, "that would be a big lie."

"Not in the mind of your true self," I replied.

"You must get rid of the attitude of mind that is defeating you," I said. "You must learn to forget, and the only way to do it is to pray yourself into goodwill if the poisons of ill-will are to be eliminated."

Grudgingly he promised to carry out this procedure, and he did He reported afterwards that for the first week it was a very painful process

"Imagine it," he said, "my praying and asking that those good-for-nothing high-binders should go past me in business But what do you know! As I kept at it, one day when I was praying, of a sudden I felt better inside. I felt light as a feather and happy and experienced such relief as you have no idea"

"The pain that was inside of you, has it left you?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "it was just like a great wave of peace coming into me."

Now, months later, he tells me that he has even learned to like the men he formerly hated He had a block that was causing a lessening of power in his mind Had he kept on with this hatred, he would probably have become a sick man Many people would find if they would honestly trace it back in their minds that much of their nervousness, irritability, even physical ills are caused by personal conflict and hate that they will not forget In the instance of this man, his emotional sickness was healed by employing a powerful spiritual antidote, and as a result he became happy and efficient. He learned to forget and so he was able to go ahead.

One should not only "forget those things which are behind", but also "reach forth unto those things that are before". There should always be the idea of forward moving—moving away from a situation which one desires to forget I know a wealthy widow, a gracious and lovely lady Like many women bereaved of brilliant business husbands and trusting people's honesty and kindness, she was fleeced out of a large sum. She lost thousands of dollars, and futilely she asked again and again "Why did I do it?"

She had to learn to think of her experience as money well spent, for she learned a lesson "It is worth a great deal to you to learn that all kinds of people exist in the world, so take your lesson and walk away from it a wiser woman," I commented Walk away from things that are over and past and cannot be helped Reach forth to the things that are before Take your lesson—make yourself wiser Avoid useless post-mortems on past mistakes Forget them and go ahead

My friend, Grove Patterson, editor of the *Toledo Blade*, and one of the greatest editors in America, says that he was a frequent victim of his own post-mortems. He would lie awake at night trying to figure out why he did this or that, or didn't do it But he found a solution Not being able to do anything about it, he just forgot it by saying "So what!" This, says Grove Patterson, induces a strange tranquillity Of course it does, for it relieves the mind of the foolishness of carrying past actions which for good or ill are done

Whatever has happened, it makes no difference what, there are only two things to do: (1) Do everything that you reasonably can about it, (2) then practise forgetting it. Walk away from it in your thoughts Conceive of it as lying back there growing ever more dim against the horizon as

each day carries you farther from it. Unless you do this you will hamper your efficiency. If in addition to present problems, you pile high on your memory past actions that are now outdated, you will go staggering through life under an impossible load.

A high-ranking Army officer came to my office. He paced the floor, he wept. He was a big, fine-looking man and he apologised for weeping. I went out of the room and said: "Go ahead, cry it out." When I returned he said: "My life is ruined."

He had been drinking considerably.

"I tried to forget it by drinking," he explained, "but couldn't, so I went out and got into a taxi and said to the driver. 'Take me to a church.' "

"What church?" the taxi-driver asked.

"Any church," the officer replied.

"Catholic or Protestant?" asked the driver.

"Protestant preferably, but any church; take me to a house of God," was the man's reply. And the taxi-driver brought him to our church.

"Well," I asked, "what is the matter?"

"I was never cut out for this military business," he explained "I hate it with all my heart. I am a farmer and all my life I have loved growing things, I love life, I hate the destructiveness of war. I have seen it all, I have been through the most terrible experiences, things I shall never be able to forget," he replied.

"What is the main thing you won't forget?" I asked

He replied "One American soldier had shot another and I sat on the court and we voted him death. As long as I live I shall never cease to see the face of the kid, when one of his own American officers read the sentence that he was to die I shall never forget his face"

This man obviously faced deterioration unless he could properly learn the art of forgetting.

"You thought you did your duty, didn't you?" I said.

He replied "Yes."

I continued. "The boy is dead, isn't he?"

"Yes," said he.

"You can't bring him back," I told him. "You as a representative of the sovereign rights of a nation passed judgment upon him. It was part of your duty as a soldier."

I said "My friend, it is done. Why don't you look at that face that you say you will never cease to see and say:

'Son, I want to live for you as I live for myself, and in the long years that are to come, if there is anything wrong with the whole military system, I will do my utmost to correct it. I will live for your country and mine and the things for which you died'."

The act had been irrevocable. He could not go back and restore the boy to life. This officer had to walk away from it, whether it was a mistake or not. The cure consisted of forgetting that which was past, and also of reaching forth unto the things that are before. He picked up his hat, there was a look of peace on his face, and he said. "I see it. I have something greater than I realised to live for."

He asked and received forgiveness for any wrong done. Now he must forget the things that are behind, weave any mistakes into the pattern of life, discipline his thinking by bringing into the mind spiritual thoughts of God's purpose, and walk away from the mistakes (if such they are), having learned wisdom from them.

My friend, Dr. Smiley Blanton, an eminent psychiatrist, once stated to me that in his opinion the wisest psychiatric statement ever made was the words from Ephesians. "Having done all, stand" These words were uttered many generations ago by one of the most astute minds history has ever produced, a man named St. Paul. Dr. Blanton said that he has read practically everything in the field of psychiatry and that there is nothing to equal the wisdom and insight contained in these few words: "Having done all, stand"

The psychiatric, curative value of St. Paul's statement is based on the simple process—do the best you can. Do all you can Give a proposition or a problem or a situation all the energy both physical and mental of which you are capable. Leave no stone unturned Exercise all your ingenuity and efficiency, then realise there is nothing further that you can do about it; therefore, there is no use fretting, worrying, or engaging in mental post-mortems; no use rehashing or going over the situation. You have done all you can do, therefore *stand*; that is, do not allow yourself to be upset; trust God and trust what you have done It will come out the way it ought to come out if you will just leave it alone

When Henry Ford was seventy-five years old, he was asked the secret of his health and calm spirit "Three rules," he answered, "I do not eat too much; I do not worry too

much, if I do my best, I believe that what happens, happens for the best."

The fact that religious people—that is, genuinely religious people—learn this art almost by second nature, is one of the reasons why the practise of religion is so vitally important.

I saw a very interesting and unforgettable demonstration of this truth in a railway station in a large city during wartime. The gateman, a huge fellow, let some soldiers through the gate when the train came in before he allowed the civilians to pass through. A humble mother clung to a young soldier, to the boy's obvious embarrassment. She was making quite a demonstration of her grief, which apparently she was unable to control. The son gently, but firmly, was trying to get away from his mother, for unconsciously he realised that she was approaching hysteria As he passed from sight through the gate, she sank against an iron rail and sobbed bitterly. Indeed, she all but screamed.

I was standing near-by and noticed that as the crowd moved through the gate, the gateman was watching her closely.

Presently he left his post and went over and spoke to the woman A change seemed to come over her as he talked. He assisted her to a seat. Her sobbing ceased and she leaned back, calm and relaxed. Then I heard him say as he left her "Remember now what I told you."

My curiosity aroused, I engaged him in conversation. "I watched you handle that woman, and if I am not too inquisitive, I would like to know what you said to her"

"Oh," he replied, "I didn't say anything."

"I am sure you must have said something very helpful," I coaxed, "for obviously it had its effect upon her. I would be interested in knowing just what you did tell her"

"Well, I will tell you It is this way. I saw that she had lost her grip, so I just went over and said to her: 'Listen, mother, I know exactly how you feel. I have been through it myself. Lots of people have, but you have just got to forget these things I don't mean that you are going to forget the boy, but you are going to forget your fears' Then I just added 'Put your faith in God and He will see both you and the boy through'"

A bit surprised, I asked him "Are you a religious man?"

"What does it sound like?" he asked.

This man was wise in the ways of human nature because he was a student of spiritual techniques He realised that

this woman needed to know how to forget her fears that she might go ahead. He knew how to apply mental and spiritual therapeutic. She, on the other hand, was able to receive his guidance. In each of them faith was an active quality. Thus the mental adjustment was made which gave her power to go ahead. Her mind accepted the sane and sensible proposition that "having done all" she could "stand".

Adversity and failure may become obsessions which freeze the mind, thus preventing new ideas from gaining entrance. One must be able to forget adversity and failure and go forward. If a person will keep his mind fluid, new insights and ideas will come.

I know a man and his wife who discovered how to perform this very important feat of forgetting in order to make progress.

He was a partner in a business which suffered a disastrous fire and he emerged from this tragedy all but ruined financially. It broke the spirit of both the man and wife. The wife sat at home and worried about it, and he went out and worried about it, futilely tramping the streets. "Why did this have to happen to us?" they bewailed again and again. They simply could not forget it, and not only were they failing to recoup, but they were both getting into a highly nervous state.

In fact, the wife worried so much that finally they sent her off to a sanitorium. While she was in the sanitorium she stumbled on a new idea of praying. She discovered that it is not effective to pray frantically and in an attitude of desperation, for in so doing the mind is not receptive. Fear has closed it against any fresh concept. She learned to pray in a relaxed manner. She definitely practised relaxing her body before beginning to pray. She relaxed her mind by giving the entire problem into the hands of God. In her prayer she said that she and her husband were ready to do anything that God wanted them to do, if He would show them.

After a few days her mind took a strange turn. She began to think of some pot-holders she had made. The idea of these pot-holders kept coming into her mind. They were simple little things made out of cloth, merely little pot-holders that she had sewed herself. They constantly kept coming into her mind as she prayed. Finally in her prayer she said "Lord, what is it that you are trying to tell me about these pot-holders?" She declares that the Lord seemed to say to her "Go home and start making pot-holders."

She felt this so keenly that she did go home and started making them. Her husband, a great giant of a fellow, sat in the kitchen and helped her. One day to his amazement he sold the whole lot of them to the purchasing agent of a chain store who said "These are wonderful pot-holders. We will take all you can make"

They went on making pot-holders and then she thought of some other things to make She was very handy. She began to make other little knick-knacks which her husband sold to the chain store To sum it up, they finally built a plant, and at the present time have about four hundred employees making a great array of the most interesting and useful articles.

This woman's discovery of a new and simple technique of prayer did two things for her. First, it released her from failure by teaching her how to forget; and in the second place, having freed her mind of the creeping paralysis of this developing obsession about the past, she got an insight which changed everything and opened up a successful future.

This woman had to face a crisis. Usually we think of a crisis as a dangerous something that we wish we did not have to face Perhaps when our civilisation is older we may acquire some of the timeless wisdom of the East. The Chinese word for crisis has two characters The first character means "danger". But the second character means "opportunity". And there you have it a crisis is a danger point and an opportunity too. It all depends on whether you can forget the failures and mistakes and look expectantly to see in your situation, however unhappy it may be on the surface, the unexpected values and great opportunity it may contain.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW TO BE FREE FROM FEAR

"THE commonest and subtlest of all human diseases is fear," says a distinguished physician

A well-known psychologist declares that fear is the most disintegrating enemy of human personality.

Obviously these scientific men are referring not to normal but to abnormal fear. Normal fear is both necessary and desirable. It is a mechanism designed for our protection.

Without normal fear a person cannot be a well-organised personality. He would be lacking in ordinary and sensible caution. Normal fear prevents us from taking chances, from doing hazardous and foolish things.

But the line of distinction between normal and abnormal fear is very finely drawn. Before one realises, he may step across the line from normal fear into the dark and shadowy regions of abnormal fear. And what a terror abnormal fear is! It disturbs your days and haunts your nights. It is a centre and source of complexes. It tangles the mind with obsessions It draws off energies, destroys inner peace, blocks power It reduces one to ineffectiveness and frustrates ambitions. Abnormal fear is the poisonous well out of which dismal unhappiness is drawn. It makes life literally a hell. Many are they who suffer from this grievous malady. How pathetic and pitiful they are—the unhappy victims of abnormal fear

But you can be free from such fear. Abnormal fear can be cured. In this chapter we shall outline a cure that will work if you will work it.

A doctor, in boyhood, developed a fear psychosis. It grew upon him until by the time he entered medical school it was drawing off the energies of his mind so much that it was only by Herculean efforts that he was able to do his work. It put an abnormal strain on his energies which left him weak and ineffective

With great expenditure of nervous energy he finally qualified and went into internship still carrying his heavy burden of fear.

Finally, unable to stand it longer, he consulted one of his medical teachers and said "I must be rid of this terrible burden of fear or I will have to give up." The older physician, a wise and kindly man, directed the young student to a Healer who, as he cleverly said, "keeps office in the New Testament".

"I followed my teacher's suggestion," he declared, "and that physician gave me a medicine which made me well"

And what was this medicine? It was not a liquid in a bottle, nor was it compounded as a pellet, but it was in the form of words It was that potent combination of words called a Biblical text "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1 7).

"I *took* those words," said the young doctor. "I allowed

them to sink deeply into my mind. By a process of intellectual and spiritual osmosis, their healing potency penetrated and infiltrated into my mind and, in due course, deliverance came, followed by a strange sense of peace."

It is remarkable what a few words can do when they are the right words. Dr. Edward Trudeau, famed pioneer in the treatment of tuberculosis, who himself succumbed to that disease, gained strength by repeating several times daily the word "acquiescence". He would say it slowly, allowing its great meaning to sink deeply into his mind. Dr. Paul Dubois, Swiss psychotherapist, who had to struggle against obstacles, practised saying the word "invulnerability"

I have observed the strange power in a similar use of Bible verses. The Bible advocates this practice, for it says "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv 7). That is to say, if a person *abides* (meaning a long-term, habitual, mental immersion) in communion with Christ, and allows Christ's words to "*abide*" (that is, to linger as a permanent thought in the mind), he will develop such a potentiality of power that life will flow towards him rather than away from him. He will be released and his powers function efficiently. Law then operates in his favour rather than against him, for now his changed thought pattern has put him in harmony with law or truth.

If you are troubled by fear, I suggest that you too "take these healing words "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"

But what is the "medicine" that is compounded in these words? One of the words is *power*. What power? The only power that can counteract fear is the power of faith. Faith is ordinarily thought of as theological, as the acceptance of a creed. We also think of faith as an intellectual proposition, an assent to an idea But there is another meaning to faith It is something alive and active. It is a vital substance like sunlight, like the violet ray, like the growth of our beings Faith is not only theological and intellectual, but also acts as a medicine That is to say, it is a healing property for the mind, the soul, and often the body as well.

How is medicine taken? Ordinarily through the mouth or by injection into the blood stream, but there are other entrances through which medicine may be inserted. One is through the eye For example, pick up the Bible and read some of its great words A reflection is made on the

retina of the eye. This image changes into the form of an idea a positive idea of faith The idea passes through the mind until it arrives at the infection point caused by fear There it throws its healing influence around the centre of infection It drives off infection and finally, through the therapeutic operation of a spiritual idea, the diseased idea is cast from the mind One, therefore, has taken medicine (a healing agent) through the reading of the Scriptures. A powerfully healthy idea has driven out an unhealthy idea.

Again, you may take spiritual medicine through the ear. Go to church Hear the Bible read Listen to the sermon. Sound-waves fall upon your ear and are admitted into the brain in the form of a spiritual idea. By a similar process the healing idea makes its way to the diseased centre and engages in battle with the fear thought By reason of its superior power, faith drives fear out and takes possession.

The mind having been cleansed, the centre of infection heals rapidly until a normal condition again prevails This may be a curious way of describing the effect of faith in the mind, but this concept of faith as a vital healing agent has worked for so many that its validity is proven.

The world is filled with worried, anxious people, who are made so because of the thoughts they habitually think If such people will practise the creative idea of religious faith, allowing it to dominate their minds, everything can become different Many people have been healed of the debilitating influence of fear through no other means than a new concept of faith entering their minds

A prominent business man came for an appointment "Do you think I am losing my mind?" was his question.

"You look rational enough," I replied. "What makes you think you are losing your mind?"

"Because I cannot make the simplest decisions," he replied "Throughout my business career I have handled matters of large importance and have made decisions affecting vast sums of money But now the simplest and most seemingly unimportant decisions cause me no end of struggle When finally I make a decision, I am haunted by the possibility I have decided incorrectly As a result I am filled with fear Perhaps my inability to make decisions is caused by my fear. Anyway, I seem to be afraid of everything. I have been sitting in the balcony of your church on Sundays and am interested in the idea of faith as a healing property

"Throughout my life when I have been sick physically,

I have gone to doctors and they have given me prescriptions Now I am not sick in my body, but I believe I certainly am sick emotionally and spiritually. I am slipping badly. Can't you give me a spiritual prescription?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied. "I can give you a spiritual prescription, and if you will take it faithfully, you will get well."

"That is what I want," he said, "and I will faithfully practise it"

I gave him the following "prescription". When you awaken in the morning before you arise, completely relax yourself. Stretch your arms out as far as possible, then allow them to fall limply on the bed Do the same with your legs. Also practise opening and closing your eyes by letting your eyelids drop laxly. Relax your fingers. Then conceive of your entire body as being inert, yielded to the bed. Completely let go. Allow all the tension to go out of you (This method of relaxation was more fully described in earlier chapters)

When you feel that you have accomplished this, close your eyes and pray. "God, I am going to get up now and go to the office You are going with me, for you said 'I am with you always.' I shall not be afraid all day long because you are with me I shall have some decisions to make, but you will be with me, helping me, and the decisions will be made satisfactorily because you will be there to guide me."

"Next," I said, "go to your office, and after lunch lie down, if you have a place to do so. If not, lean forward on your desk Put your head on your hands Again relax the body and, having done so, pray, saying 'Lord, we had a wonderful morning together. We made some decisions and they are good decisions because you were with me. We are forgetting them now and I am not afraid, for you are with me'"

Finally "Go to bed at a reasonable hour. Before you get into bed, throw up the windows, fill the room with fresh air, take a half-dozen deep breaths, inhale and exhale deeply, slowly. Deep breathing has a powerful effect in reducing tension Then get into bed and again practise the formula of relaxation."

"What about saying my prayers? I always say them on my knees by my bed," he complained.

"Well," I replied, "evidently the kind of prayers you have been saying on your knees haven't been doing you

much good, so we will change the method of your prayers. I believe it is a good thing to kneel down to pray, for the spirit of adoration is stimulated by the act of kneeling, but it is a mistake to become so stereotyped in your method of prayer that the freshness goes out of it Try another method for a while, if only for the sake of variety."

"That is wonderful," he said; "I always wanted to pray in bed, but my wife would never let me because she said I would go to sleep before my prayers were finished."

"God would understand that," I said. "It isn't so much what you say as that you think of Him. He knows what is in your mind, anyway.

"Get into bed and relax Then close your eyes and pray: 'Lord, we had a great day together I wasn't afraid because you were with me all day long. We made some decisions and they must be all right, for you helped me make them. Now you will be with me in the darkness to watch over me. The decisions are made. We shall let them stand, and we shall have a great time to-morrow.'

"Then turn out the light and repeat these words: 'He giveth his beloved sleep.' Then go to sleep. Don't be afraid of anything."

On a sheet of paper I wrote "Spiritual Prescription" and outlined the above-described process. A man with a great brain has the ability to be simple. I have never seen a first-class mind that could not be naive, simple, and even child-like An intellect that cannot react simply is not a first-class mind, no matter how profound a man may appear to be This man had a first-class mind.

"Take that prescription three times a day for two weeks," I said "Then come back and see me."

To-day he is a well man His mind is clear. He is not afraid. He is in perfect control and is having the time of his life helping other people He says he cannot understand how he lived so long and missed this "simple and wonderful secret".

Some time later I met an important executive of a large organisation. He pulled from his pocket a little paper on which was written "Spiritual Prescription".

"Where did you get that?" I asked, and found that our friend had given it to him. This executive commented: "It worked for him and I was greatly impressed. It works for me also"

You do not need to be haunted by fear. Your religion can help you. It acts as a medicine, releasing power in your mind, the power of faith which drives away fear.

That the technique of faith eliminates fear many can testify. "The first time I jumped from a plane," a paratrooper told me, "everything in me resisted. All there was between death and me was a piece of cord and a little patch of silk, but when I actually found out for myself that the patch of silk would hold me, I had the most marvellous feeling of exultation in all my life I wasn't afraid of anything and the release from fear filled me with exquisite delight. I really did not want to come down; I was actually happy."

Fear defeats us because we are unwilling to put our trust in what we regard as an ethereal thing, namely, faith in God, but like the paratrooper, when we leap out, trusting to faith, we find that this mystic and apparently fragile thing actually holds us up.

This is an important truth, but I must confess that it took me years to learn it and even longer to be willing to practise it Strange how we can have at hand the formula that can mean so much, yet we will not take this attitude. "I will do all that I can do about any problem. Beyond that I shall trust in God and know my faith will hold me up."

The second ingredient in the medicine against fear is love Love is one of the most misunderstood and misused words in the English language Hollywood and current fiction have made of it a sticky, even questionable sentiment It has been made synonymous with sex. But love is not that at all It is a strong, dominant, curative emotion or force. It is the power by which we make transference to other people and through which they help us. It is also the power by which we make transference to God, through which God, loving us, gives us strength and power "Perfect love casteth out fear," because perfect love is complete trust.

Love is the natural, naive, basic relation that a human being should have with God. When he does, he can move through this world unafraid He believes that someone is with him who loves him. He knows that he can trust this someone to protect him and watch over him.

If you really want to know how to live, associate with children If you have none of your own, borrow some There are times when I would almost be willing to lend you

my three, but I would want them back very quickly, for I would become very stodgy without them.

When our first child arrived, I was afraid to touch her, thinking she would break to pieces. I know now that they are not as fragile as they seem and have been convinced that a little rought treatment helps them. I was not quite so fearful of our second child. He was a little tougher than his older sister, but it was not until our third baby came that I was really released.

I found great pleasure in tossing her high in the air. I did not toss her so far that I couldn't catch her, but she always seemed to enjoy being tossed. As I threw her up, she would take a breath, and then, as she came down, she would snuggle into my arms and laugh like a rippling brook, and then cry: "Do it again, Daddy." I became amazed by the fact that apparently she had no fear. Children are said to have two basic fears, fear of falling and fear of loud noises, but she had no fear of being tossed. I think it was because instinctively she knew that the person tossing her loved her, therefore, she trusted him. "Perfect love casteth out all fear" in her, so she yielded herself to the fun and was perfectly relaxed.

One of the wisest things ever said was when Jesus Christ advised us to have the attitude and mind of little children. Our so-called "smart" sophistication has just about ruined us emotionally. It may be one reason for the tension, "nerves", and breakdowns of our time. Form a simple love for God as a kindly Father who will take care of you. If you learn to love Him, you will learn to trust Him, and then you will not say to yourself with terror: "I wonder what is going to happen? How will I ever get through this thing?" Trust God, believing He will see you through. This is a simple dogma of Christianity, but it is one of the most neglected and unused. Develop a simple childlike trust in God and see how your problem of fear clears up.

It might be a good idea in church to take up not one collection, but two. Very large baskets might be used for the second collection, the ushers bringing them down the aisles. The people might be asked to put not money but their fears in these baskets. When all the fears had been gathered up, let the ushers bring these baskets to the altar. They would be so heavy now that the ushers would stagger under them, but what a sense of release would be in that congregation! Only one hymn could be appropriately sung:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow" The released congregation would sing with such fervour that the very roof would tremble

But do you know what would happen after the benediction? The people would start out and then one by one with sheepish grin they would turn and come back to the basket in which each had placed his fear and fish around until he had found it. People are so used to their fears that they would feel home-sick without them. People become such victims of fear that they are afraid to walk away from them.

But when a man habitually affirms: "I love God, He has been good to me and I can trust Him, so I am going to put my fear in His hands and walk away from it," that man will find release.

If you are worrying about something, practise this little formula before you start out to-morrow morning. Stop for a minute and say "God is with me. He loves me. I can trust Him. So I will do my best and I won't be afraid." You can depend upon this to work, after you have practised it for a few days. Make this an automatic procedure and it will release a tremendous power against fear in your personality.

The final ingredient in the medicine for the cure of fear is a "sound mind". Obviously the reason we have fears is because we develop an unsound or tangled mind The unsound mind develops in various ways. It often begins in childhood when parents unconsciously implant their own fears and anxieties in the child's mind.

It also develops from the breakdown of morals so widely prevalent to-day. People get the idea that the Christian moral code no longer prevails and that they may violate it with impunity. They learn to their sorrow that what we call sin is, in reality, a wound in the mind. Sorrow, for example, is a clean wound. It hurts, it cuts deeply, but it will heal because there is no infection in it. But sin is an unclean wound It is a foreign substance invading the mind, and the mind tries to close around it, but it cannot; it becomes infected

A man may carry this guilt through youthful years and even into middle life, but all the time, like a suppurating tooth, it sends infection into his emotional system. Men will sometimes break down and attribute the disaster to overwork, and it may be that, but often the real cause may

be the infection-drain of a sense of guilt Out of this state of infection rise the ghosts which haunt a man's mind. These ghosts fill him with fear, and his mind becomes so tangled with obsessive notions, reactions and impulses that everything is tinctured with fear

It is really a very pathetic thing when one allows a foreign substance to enter one's mind. If you were to open up a fine watch and push a pebble into the works, people would think you were demented. Yet people do an equally destructive thing to their minds. It has got so that if anyone tries to dissuade people from committing this offence against themselves, he is termed an old fogey or mossback

I have observed over a period of years in the religio-psychologic clinic of our church that a very large number who come to us for treatment are people afflicted with a sense of guilt It is curious how many of those who come are on the young side of life—that is, under forty. Fear is their main trouble. Often the basic cause is that, having departed from moral living, they have become victims of a sense of guilt. The end of the process is such a tangle of emotional reactions that St. Paul's implication of an unsound mind is not far from the facts.

They are afraid that they will be found out. They are afraid of the future They have lost confidence in themselves. They are afraid of other people They have become victims of blind, unreasoning, fundamental fear. They have a psychosis. They throw the lie right back in the face of the unsophisticated novice in life who tells them that they must be "emancipated" There is only one way to be emancipated, and that is through the discipline of spiritual morality. Follow that and you will not be afraid of man nor the devil Your mind will be sound, stable and rational

How is the "unsound mind" cured? Analysis oftentimes is helpful. When you understand why you react in a certain way, improvement often begins at once. Self-knowledge leads to self-improvement. The practice of spiritual formulæ is helpful One of the great needs is for people to know the "how" of practising the spiritual life People are urged to pray, but are not told exactly how to pray. We are urged to have faith, but are not instructed in the precise and workable procedures of faith. Our forefathers worked out techniques which were satisfactory to them We need now to re-learn the simple ABCs of how to put the curative principles of faith into operation.

In an attempt to meet this need the following incidents may serve as a suggested practice These represent two simple "spiritual devices" which were employed successfully in the cases of two people who appealed for help. . . .

There came to our church clinic a successful New York business man who was haunted by fear. The strain was breaking him down, and he knew that he must find a cure for his fears

He had started attending church, which he had not done for a long time Then he came for an interview. He described attitudes and actions which certainly had infection qualities in them. He thoroughly cleansed his mind by confession He received forgiveness, but his fears had continued for so long that he could not let them go. God had forgiven him, but he had difficulty forgiving himself

He called upon me about every fortnight I told him there was nothing to be afraid of. He would leave with his mind at rest, but two weeks later the fears would return and he would be back again. I finally said to him "You fail to get rid of this state of fear because you are always asking God to remove it, yet not believing that He is doing so. You are an expert asker, but a poor receiver. What good do you accomplish by asking continuously, yet never practising the art of receiving?"

I quoted the Bible statement "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you." I pointed out that the word "receive" quickly follows the word "ask", that the word "find" follows hard upon the word "seek", and "shall be opened" comes closely after the word "knock".

The plain meaning, I explained, is that we are to ask, then have such simple faith that we shall immediately receive.

Here is a clear law have faith, ask God for something, believe that you will receive it. My caller said that he understood, but had never done it that way.

Then we hit upon a device I asked him to put his watch on a table before him and, keeping his eyes on the watch, to pray for two minutes, asking God to take his fear away. He objected "How can I pray with my eyes open?"

"Do you always pray with your eyes shut?" I asked

"Certainly."

"Well," I observed, "your prayers with your eyes shut apparently haven't done you much good Don't be stereotyped Try praying with your eyes open"

Rather sheepishly he kept his eyes on his watch and for two minutes asked God to remove his fears. When the two minutes were up, he said "Amen."

"Now," I directed, "say another prayer for two minutes, but this time thank God for doing what you asked—namely, for taking your fear away"

"Why!" he exclaimed "Has He taken my fear away?"

"You asked Him to, didn't you?" I said. "According to the formula, your fear is gone—if you will let it go You must make up your mind to accept the great thing God has done for you. So, for the next two minutes thank Him."

This was three years ago. Recently I saw the man again. "I'm away ahead of you," he boasted. "Nowadays I ask God for only one half minute to help in solving a problem, and I thank Him for three and one half minutes."

"Do you still use the watch?" I asked in surprise.

"Of course! You told me to, didn't you?"

The watch was merely a symbol, I explained. Symbol or no symbol, he said that he was going to "stick to the watch". I may add that those who doubt this as good religious practice might recall the Biblical injunction: "*Watch* and pray."

If you do not find help in your usual religious practices, why not try such a simple formula as I have described? Simplicity is the essence of spiritual power

A second incident illustrating spiritual techniques for the elimination of fear is the story of a young woman who telephoned me one day during war-time Her husband was overseas, and so sure was she that something would happen to him that she had a bad case of nerves amounting almost to panic. She was in New York, away from relatives and friends, having no one else to turn to, she appealed to me as a minister. "What shall I do?" she kept repeating. "It would kill me to lose my husband."

"How old are you, young lady?" I asked over the telephone

"Twenty-six."

I thought I heard a child's voice, so I asked. "Have you a youngster there?"

"Yes, a two-year-old girl," she replied.

"Is she upset and worried like yourself?"

"Why, of course not!" she answered.

"How do you explain her lack of nervousness?" I asked.

She hesitated. "Why, because she's only a baby. Besides,

she has me, her mother, with her. I suppose she just puts her trust in me and lets me do the worrying."

That gave me an opening to suggest one of the simplest cures the Christian faith offers for worry. "Have you an easy-chair close by?" I asked "If so, please draw it up to the telephone and sit down."

After a moment she reported that she had done so.

"Now put your head back," I directed. "Relax your body and take three deep breaths"

For the first time she laughed a bit, then asked dubiously. "Shall I really?"

"I suppose it does sound queer," I admitted, "but three deep breaths taken in and completely exhaled relieve tension.

"Next," I continued, after she told me she had followed these directions, "take your little girl on your lap Now make a transference; try to think of yourself as a child in relationship to God. As your child puts her trust in you, her mother, so may you, by concentrating upon it, put your trust in your Heavenly Father. Put your husband—put all three of you —in God's care Practise this simple procedure until peace comes to your mind"

She promised After church the following Sunday a young woman came up to me and said "I'm the one who telephoned you about being nervous I tried your method and it works I have control of myself now and I know I won't get panicky again."

Then she added. "I always thought religion was a vague sort of thing—just something you believe in. I'm beginning to see that it really works"

Don't settle down to live permanently with your fear. If you do so you will never be happy. You will never be effective There will be no success and happiness for you. Remember there is a cure for fear. Say confidently to yourself. "Through God's help and the application of simple techniques, I will be free from fear." Believe that—practise it and it will be so

CHAPTER NINE

HOW POWER AND EFFICIENCY CAN BE YOURS

EVERY normal person wants a feeling of power Not power over other people, for that is a disease and abnormality. But every normal person wants power over circumstances; power over situations; power over fear, power over weakness; power over themselves And . . . everyone can have that power.

Everyone desires to be efficient, everyone desires to perform with skill. Efficiency is an element in power Without it there can be no grip or mastery. There is great satisfaction in being able to do a thing well. To see a game played well, to hear a song sung expertly, to watch a skilful actor on the stage, is a source of happiness. It is not so much the game itself, or the song, or the action on the stage. It is the delight in witnessing a perfect demonstration. Even a commonplace thing done well gives a glow of satisfaction not only to the person who performs it, but to all who witness it This truth was recently brought home to me at a luncheon

The service was by an old-fashioned butler, a master at his art. He had composure, a quality which is always to be admired. He was not in the least flustered, as the average waiter or waitress seems to be these days He took his job in his stride deftly and with gentility. Lingering after the luncheon, I said "I want to congratulate you. I always like to watch a man who knows how to do his job. I admire the master of any art, and I have seen one to-day in you."

He was pleased and said "Beg your pardon, sir, it *is* an art. I learned it in England, sir, in the old days"

Let us take it for granted you want, like this superb butler, to be efficient. You can be efficient! How? Upon the answer depend to a large degree your success and happiness. And the answer is—seek to become expert in the practice of your religious faith. There was a time when a reader at this point would explain: "Here is where we go from common sense to theory." There is an old and false notion, happily disappearing, that anything religious is theoretical

—that it just doesn't fit into practical life. But intelligent people nowadays realise that Christianity is not a Sunday-go-to-meeting thing, remote from practical living, but a scientific, usable technique.

A prominent advertising man said to me. "There will be a definite up-surge of religion in the post-war era."

"Why?" I asked.

"Because," he replied, "after every great war, perhaps due to the dislocations incidental to war and the necessary readjustments, there is always a widespread desire for self-improvement The best ways to improve yourself are by the application of either psychology or religion, perhaps by both of them. Psychology, in my opinion, however, does not go deeply enough; therefore this post-war generation will learn that efficiency, the ability to handle people and to get along, the ability to do things well, is a product of practical religion."

This advertising expert went on to tell about a large account that he had handled for several years. It was a course in beauty culture for women, which he had prepared by employing outstanding authorities to write booklets on various phases of the subject. One pamphlet told how to take care of the body, another how to eat properly; another how to use cosmetic preparations. The course was designed to release the inner charm and beauty of the feminine personality. This course together with a kit of cosmetic articles had been sold to more than a quarter of a million persons. Now a new advertising project had come his way, and he was discussing it with me.

The new project was to teach men how to be effective. The client was a clothing house, and a series of pamphlets was under preparation, each teaching a man how to be his full self and completely release his personality. For example, a famous athletic director was writing a pamphlet on exercise. Another expert was writing on how to wear clothes properly—how to know what shirt goes with a certain suit, and how to select a well-matched tie. Another pamphlet had to do with methods of approaching a customer, how to sell one's self, how to sell a product.

But the crux of the matter, said the advertising man, "is to teach our customers how to think; how to release the deeper spiritual self".

He concluded with this pregnant statement· "It is impossible to create an efficient man unless he has some kind

of spiritual experience. Without this experience the thing that gives him the final touch of power is lacking."

There was a time when Christianity was generally regarded by the average person as theoretical and having no relation to practical everyday affairs The advertising expert I have quoted is the refutation of this notion. Men who really think now know that Christian principles are the most skilful, most necessary principles in developing successful and efficient men and women It is being demonstrated that no other system is so completely designed to give skill, power and efficiency to modern people as the simple principles of the Bible.

Here is further proof. A prominent periodical wrote up the "amazing" career of a successful business woman. What made her success all the more remarkable was the fact that she had had no previous business experience. So she had been asked to outline the principles upon which she had built her business. When she submitted the article, the publisher exclaimed "This is astounding. These ideas are unique. Would you mind telling me where you got them?"

She smiled and said: "I guess you are not very familiar with the Bible. My article is practically a re-write of the twelfth chapter of Matthew."

The most antiquated man nowadays is the rare one who still gets off the old canard that religion is something for Sunday only. That remark stamps him as belonging to the horse-and-buggy era

Probably the reason so-called practical men think of Christianity as theoretical is because they regard it entirely as theology or philosophy. It does fulfil itself in these fields, but Christianity may also be thought of as a science. In fact, it is an exact science, for it is based on law, as is any science. It is the science of personal and social living. Learn its laws and you will always and invariably get equivalent results

It is rather crude to think that the only law existing in our universe is that which governs material things We are constantly finding new applications of power in the universe and each new one is, as are all the others, regulated by law The latest, of course, is atomic power. The average man scarcely knew this form of power existed, yet it has released such force that he is aghast. It is interesting to recall that years ago the famous scientist, Steinmetz, said that the greatest scientists of the future would be those who would chart and explain spiritual laws.

The New Testament has always been regarded as a distinctly religious book, and it is that, but it may also be thought of as a formula book of spiritual science It contains procedures by which anybody who intelligently applies them can develop power in his mind and personality.

So we have available a spiritual science equally as great, perhaps greater, and more valuable than the laws of chemistry, physics, electronics or atomics. In a power plant an eminent engineer once described to me a powerful dynamo. He commented on the amount of energy this dynamo could generate, but as we walked away he said: "It may sound queer, but you and I can generate more actual energy by means of faith and prayer than that dynamo can produce. I mean that too," he added firmly.

. . . . .

It is a fact that Christianity is a power mechanism. St. Mark says.

> *For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say* unto this mountain be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt *in his heart*, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.
>
> Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

Putting those words into present-day speech, what do they say? Just this—if you have faith, not a great deal of faith, just a little real faith, not any larger than a grain of mustard seed, which is quite small, then you shall say to "this mountain", that great rock-like obstruction that lies across your pathway, always defeating you, "be removed", and it shall not only be removed, but shall be cast into the sea (i.e., swallowed up out of sight). And if you shall not doubt this in your heart—that is, shall not have a negative attitude about it in the subconscious—but shall simply believe, whatsoever you ask shall come to pass.

A psychiatrist of undisputed standing stated that one of the most powerful forces is released through a formula in Matthew which reads "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" He offered it as his opinion, based on long experience in his profession, that when a patient's mind is conditioned in terms of this

scriptural verse, then the most amazing changes can and do take place. "Faith," he said, "possesses a tremendous healing property and power-producing force."

Regarding such passages from the Bible as those which I have indicated and others, there are various attitudes you can take. You may say "I don't believe it, it is just not so." Of course, you have a right not to believe it, but it is doubtful if you have a right to assert dogmatically that it is not so. In so doing you are setting yourself against the most reliable ancient document known to mankind It forces us to take a choice between whether to believe you or the document. In the face of the religious belief of many distinguished men of science, the dogmatic statement that the Bible is not so is both unimpressive and unconvincing.

Another attitude one can fall into is a passive one. You may say: "I do not understand it, I do not disbelieve it, but it is beyond me and therefore I will not use it." That, of course, simply means that a person does not avail himself of power he could employ

Probably the most sensible attitude is to assume that maybe it is true, that perhaps here is a law not perfectly understood, but one which many people have demonstrated will work Perhaps it is wise to accept the workability of the law, deriving from it what power and efficiency one can gain, hoping later to penetrate into a deeper understanding. Matters of religion should be approached in the experimental attitude of a real scientist.

I spent an afternoon not long ago in the home and laboratory of the late Thomas A Edison. Mrs Edison showed me mementos of the distinguished inventor, unquestionably one of the greatest geniuses of all time

Mrs Edison said to me that after World War I, Mr. Edison told her that in the next war the great lack would be rubber. He stated that the chances were that our rubber supply would be imperilled, if not cut off—which revealed astounding foresight in itself. Realising that it would be important to develop domestic sources of rubber, Edison began his experiments In his painstaking and thorough manner, he examined innumerable plants in the hope of finding rubber Finally he gave orders to his associates to take sickles and go out in the New Jersey meadows and cut down all the plant varieties they could find The specimens were laid on tables and painstakingly examined one by one. Finally Edison discovered in the well-known and common-

place golden rod the latex which he was seeking. At first he produced five per cent of rubber, later ten per cent, and then fifteen per cent. This was the experiment upon which he was working just before his death. When death interrupted his labours, he had released rubber from the golden rod up to the point of fifteen per cent.

The lesson to be drawn from the example of Edison is this. Some people approach spiritual laws with the rational and factual attitude of the scientist and find at first a small percentage of truth which results in a degree of power. Those who keep on operating the law, investigating and working with it, increase the percentage, and as they do so there is released into their lives mentally, physically and spiritually an increasing power and efficiency which gives them a grasp and mastery far beyond other people, especially beyond those who just dogmatically assert "There is nothing to it."

Years ago Emerson said there are unexplored chambers of the human mind which some day will be opened to release unrealised spiritual powers. A French psychiatrist says that there is another element present in the mind beyond the conscious and the subconscious This element he terms "the superconscious". The characterisation is interesting. Perhaps it was to this "superconscious" that Christ referred when He said "If you have faith . . . nothing shall be impossible unto you." When His disciples commented upon the greatness of the works which He was doing, He said: "Greater works than these shall ye do" We read that: "He marvelled because of their unbelief." That is to say, He was astonished that people who had such potential power would not release it. It is entirely likely that in you is locked up all the power and efficiency you need. Evidence gained in thousands of cases indicates that the only sure way of releasing it is to become expert in the faith mechanism described in the New Testament.

Captain Eddie Rickenbacker discovered this principle years ago He himself told me about his discovery. In an automobile race he was coming down the home stretch with his throttle wide open. Due to his sensitive "feel" of the mechanical workings of his automobile, he became aware that something was wrong. At the rate of speed at which he was travelling, this might spell disaster. He says: "A momentary tremor of fear crossed my mind, but . . . I lifted up my mind." He relates that a feeling of exultation

passed through him. It was an overwhelming and absolute conviction that he could bring that machine in, not by his hands, but by the power of his mind.

He doesn't say this boastfully, but explains that at the time he told nobody of it for fear nobody would understand. To-day, however, Captain Rickenbacker explains we are better acquainted with the law of psychokinetics, the power of the human mind over conditions, circumstances, material things. Indomitable mastery and control over adversity or opposition are exercised by the mind when the driving energy of faith is released.

• •

I am confident of the scientific workability of faith in developing power and efficiency, for the same reason that any scientist knows that a formula will work—namely, he sees it work and gets results.

In my scientific laboratory (the Marble Collegiate Church of New York) we had a member, a business executive, who became enthusiastically convinced of the techniques of faith. He had not been a long-established churchman and became interested in the Church only because he was "sold" on the idea of Christianity and its formula of faith. "I think you have got something there," he declared. Because as he put it, "there is something to it", he joined the church and was regular in attendance, enthusiastically practising spiritual techniques

One afternoon he telephoned saying· "I must see you right away about an important business matter." One might think it curious that a business man would see a minister about a business problem, but when you get right down to it, most business problems are problems in which persons are involved The minister deals with persons, and therefore he can be a scientific adjunct to anybody interested in business research

My friend, who represented a specialised business in New York, came in and said "Here is my problem. We have a competitor in the Middle West, and this competitor employs the star sales executive of our industry. This man has forgotten more about the business than the rest of us know about it Our competitor has discharged him, however, for the third and last time. I would like to employ him."

"Why don't you?" I said.

"Because," he replied, "there is a catch to it—he is an

alcoholic. My president won't take him on because he says there is no hope for an alcoholic. I have continued to urge my president, however, because I believe we can cure him. I have heard you talk from the pulpit about faith, and I am sold on the idea that if we have faith, nothing is impossible, so I have finally convinced my president, and he has told me he will give me one month to get this man cured, and if we do, I can have him on my sales force."

"Do you realise what you ask?" I said, and then I explained to him what the scientific authorities say about alcoholism. I showed him that it is scientifically regarded as a disease, one of the most serious that can attack a human being, the usual end of which is either the insane asylum or death, or both.

"I don't know anything about that," my friend insisted. "I only know that the Bible says that if you have faith—'nothing is impossible unto you'. I take that as meaning alcoholism also," he concluded firmly.

"Does this man go to church?" I asked.

"No," he answered, "he doesn't. Not very often at least."

It so happened that a church supper was scheduled for a night or two later, and I asked if he thought the alcoholic would come to that supper.

"Yes, I think he would," my friend replied. "I know he eats."

So I met this man. Later the alcoholic came to my office. He said: "Now listen, Doctor, Mr. V. is very much interested in me. He is an awfully nice fellow. But don't waste your time on me. There's no use trying to do anything with me. This thing has got me. I'm licked, completely licked."

He told me he was forty-five, and had two boys and a lovely wife. He had an engaging personality and a brilliant mind.

"You say you are licked?" I asked him.

"Yes, absolutely—completely washed up," he said.

"That's marvellous," I replied. "You are sure that you have no strength of your own?"

"No, I'm all through. Sometimes I feel if I could only get free, if I only could . . . the things I could do! But the minute I think I am free, drink knocks me back, and it has knocked me back too many times. Don't waste your time on me."

"My friend," I said, "when you tell me that you have no strength of your own, you are at the beginning of deliver-

ance, because now you are ready to say 'Having no strength of my own, I put my life in the hands of God with faith' In so doing you will get strength, all you need."

"Do you think I have a chance?" He looked up with wistful eyes

"Yes, I certainly do."

"All right," he said, "I'll do whatever you say. What do you want me to do?"

"Let's start," I suggested, "by your going to church twice every Sunday for the next month."

"Oh!" he groaned, but he agreed to do so

I wrote to Mr. V. as follows.

> Yesterday I had a very satisfactory talk with Mr. C. Our discussion was exceedingly frank.
>
> I found him absolutely honest, and it pleased me that while he admitted his weakness and did not seek in any sense to minimise it or hide it, at the same time he was not unduly derogatory of himself. Sometimes there is a tendency for a man to run himself down completely, which means that his self-respect has run out He simply, honestly, faced with me the great weakness of his character, and convinced me that it is his definite purpose to eradicate drinking from his practice.
>
> He told me that he has made one discovery which he would never admit before—namely, heretofore he has gone a considerable period of time without drinking, but always believed that he could take one drink and control the matter at that point. Now, he says, he has learned that he must not drink at all, that one drink inevitably leads to more This is pleasing, because it is extremely difficult to get an alcoholic to the acceptance of the fact that he must not drink at all The biggest delusion in the mind of the alcoholic is that he can drink moderately. With men who are alcoholically inclined there is no such thing as moderation Therefore I believe that real progress has been made with this man. He stated that his contact with religion had not been very close, but that now he has seen that religion can be a practical power in a man's life, and agreed to follow certain ideas which I laid down to him and which he found in my books He also is going to associate himself with Alcoholics Anonymous.
>
> I believe he has definitely started up the road which

leads to complete sobriety. I have weighed this carefully and I would not give this as my opinion unless I felt that he honestly means business. I think he does, and I assure you that I shall do all in my power to help him.

Incidentally, I think you have used extremely good judgment and common sense in the way you have approached this matter.

The next Sunday morning I looked down, and there was my friend, Mr. V , on the end of the aisle. Next to him was the alcoholic, and then Mr. V.'s wife. Mr. V. came up after the first service and said. "Now, Doctor, for a while forget about the rest of the congregation and preach to this man. We have to get him cured. I need him in my business"

I confess that I almost did. He was there regularly, listening carefully. It was very impressive. two business men trying to settle a business problem as a human problem.

One Sunday night about three weeks later, I was preaching on the text "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them," and outlining the power of affirmative faith. I found myself saying: "If there is anybody in this great congregation defeated by anything, no matter what it may be, if he will now believe that the power of God is being released in his life and if he will, as our heads are bowed, raise his hand as a sign and symbol of his acceptance of this power, I declare that he will now receive it" . . . which was an astounding thing to say, but I said it. We would get more astounding results from Christianity if we were not timorous about believing in it

About fifty hands went up all over the congregation. To my astonishment I saw this man's hand go up. After the service this man came up to me, shook my hand, and went away, but indirectly I heard he was doing well Later he told me that when he put up his hand "something happened to him". A feeling came over him such as a man experiences when after a long illness suddenly he realises that he is well. The urge to drink did not come back The desire *completely passed away*.

To complete this narrative, I insert the correspondence that documents this working partnership of business and religion in the problem of alcoholism.

From letter of Mr. V. written to me:

I know you are interested in Mr. C. and of developments in connection with our programme together.

I was unusually impressed and gratified to receive a letter from Mrs. C. which has reference to Mr. C. and I am sure you will be happy to read some extracts from it, and so I quote them below:

"He certainly is a changed man and I am sure it is due in a large measure to contacts with you and members of your family. I do my very best to keep up the good work while he is home. He is so sincere it is very easy to do. I've gone to church all my life and have brought the boys up that way too—but Mr. C certainly taught me a great deal about the power of faith and I'm very grateful."

You can imagine how thrilled I was to get this word from the wife of this alcoholic, and my delight in the success attendant upon our efforts was increased when I received the following letter from Mr. C..

I know you will be interested in the success that has rewarded our efforts of the past several months. The final result is my appointment as General Manager of the —— Company. At the next meeting of the Directors of the Company I am to be elected Vice-President also.

Nothing approaching this was contemplated at the outset. The sequence of things that led to it, even now, seems unbelievable. I am indeed awed. They didn't just happen and certainly were far beyond my planning. I know He answered my prayers, and yours, also those of Mr. and Mrs. V., and Mrs. C. Even my two youngest boys, ages eight and ten, included in their nightly prayers '*Special prayer for Daddy*'.

But better than all this I now have a firm hold on myself. I am sure I have the complete and simple faith to which you refer in your books and sermons. My mind is at rest and I know peace and happiness again. You can readily appreciate what it means to my wife and three boys. It has been no effort to avoid my old weakness. I seem to have found a substitute—faith.

I find it difficult to adequately express my gratitude. The change dates from the time I first attended your church and had the opportunity to talk to you personally.

Then the high spot that Sunday night in your church when on your suggestion I raised my hand in the way of public acknowledgment of God and put myself in His care To me that was tremendously impressive.

Many problems will be facing me—perhaps the biggest in my business experience. I approach them with complete confidence and with the knowledge that unlimited power and help are always available to me.

When I received this letter I knew that a healing had taken place. Even as medical science is able to develop an immunity against certain forms of disease, so it is possible by the application of spiritual techniques to change emotional and mental reactions so that a person becomes as the New Testament so picturesquely expresses it "a new creature old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new".

So I wrote to Mr C.

You have found the secret; by faith you have accepted God's power and He has given it to you

May I suggest that you form habits of prayer in which you constantly affirm to God that He has given you this strength, and thank Him for it. Pray not only in the morning and the evening, but get in the habit of turning your mind to God frequently during the day. Also, I suggest that you form the habit of reading the Psalms in the Old Testament and Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the New Testament. Read a chapter every day if possible These suggestions are to build up in your mind a consciousness of God's presence and His power. This is part of a definite spiritual technique which is very valuable.

This story of the alcoholic goes from one climax to nother. A year and a half later in one of my letters I told im that I never failed to pray for him and that I was very uch interested in having reports from him from time to me To this suggestion, he wrote me the following treendous statement of his experience

I am humbly grateful because you still remember me in your prayers It is my firm conviction that that has helped me through very difficult situations. I am referring to the many problems of business to-day, not to my old

difficulty. That is a closed book. It is now a year and a half since I even had a drop of intoxicating drink. It has not even been at all difficult. Surprisingly enough, I have never once been tempted. I am confident I won't be. This just could not have been if I had not attended Marble Collegiate Church, met you and had that first talk with you You pointed the way that changed everything for the better. My spiritual highlight was in your church one Sunday night when the congregation sat with heads bowed and eyes closed and I responded with others in raising my hand, putting myself unreservedly in God's hands. All of this is written in complete sincerity.

At the end of a year and a half he declared that he had *never even been tempted to drink alcohol*, that the cure was still operative.

Nearing the end of two years, he called on me in my office. He told me that he was on his way to the Middle West, where his company had recalled him and had made him Vice-President for the Dominion of Canada. As he sat across from my desk I asked him. "Have you ever had the desire to take alcohol since that night?"

His answer was: "Not the slightest desire."

Some people might call this a miracle. Anybody who knows the true meaning of the disease of alcoholism is well aware of the astounding thing which happened in this case.

However great a recovery this is, it *is* not a miracle. This man had made contact with a spiritual law. He was changed by the operation of this law. He discovered a basic power in the universe just as truly as the man who released atomic energy. This power is so great that it burned out of his mind every vestige of the disease which was destroying him. He discovered and put into operation the law of faith.

But the story goes on and arrives at one of the great factors in the cure of alcoholism, the urge to help someone else get cured Mr C. writes:

> I have a purchasing agent with plenty of the very same difficulty I had. I have been trying to help him over a period of several months with considerable, but not complete success I have talked to him many times—got him going to church—given him many of your sermons and books to read, and have tried to pray for him regularly. So far I haven't been completely successful in convincing him that he can't do it for himself, but to let God do it for him.

You can still feel proud of the job you did on me. It is fast approaching three years now since I have had a drink. I am much safer than any man who never touched a drop. But beyond that and more important you showed me the way to build religious faith and that means more to me than all else. I have a long, long way to go, but I really believe I make some little gain each day. In a very humble way, I try to help others do the same. You know it is rather convincing to others when an old sinner like myself tries to show the way.

I do not relate this story on the supposition that you, the reader, are an alcoholic. My purpose in telling this story is to point out that if faith can revitalise and remake an alcoholic, it can assuredly give you power and efficiency.

All around you at this moment is divine healing energy. The very atmosphere is charged with it. If you will practise faith, you can be healed of ill-will, inferiority, fear, guilt, or any other block which impedes the flow of recreative energy. Power and efficiency are available to you if you will believe.

CHAPTER TEN

HOW TO AVOID GETTING UPSET

"THAT fellow burns me up." The speaker was flushed of face as his fist crashed on the table. "I'm sick of that fellow's name in the newspaper. I'm all burned up inside."

That's a picturesque and exact description of the inward condition of that man. A seething cauldron of agitated emotion, he was truly burning up on the inside. A human being cannot for ever stand resurgence of such agitation. Every day we hear of people who become ineffective or "break", and in many cases it is simply because they allow people or situations to "burn them up".

One important rule for being happy and successful is—don't let things agitate you. This is vital.

A doctor once told me what he had prescribed for a business man who complained that his nerves were "all frazzled". "You don't need to be agitated or upset. Practise your religious faith," he suggested.

"Do you get many such cases, and is that your usual prescription?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I have noted a pronounced rise in the number of emotional and nervous problems. Many patients become ill simply because of inability to overcome prolonged agitation But, except in cases where a definite physical cause exists, my belief is that the average person need not be agitated or nervous if he will take the medicine you parsons hand out."

This wasn't the first time this idea had been presented to me About twenty years ago I took my mother to a prominent heart specialist in Boston After a thorough examination he leaned back in his chair and looked quizzically at my mother and said "Mrs Peale, are you a Christian?"

My mother had been a minister's wife for a good many years and an active church worker This question startled her.

"I try to be," she replied

"I am afraid you are not working at it very hard," the doctor said, "and there is very little I can do for you I could prescribe some medicine, but beyond palliative effects, I honestly do not believe it would be of value I suggest that you definitely practise the technique of trust, calmness and faith which you find in the New Testament. Do that and I think you will get along all right," he said.

To-day we know that an important step towards emotional and physical health is to believe in and practise your religion. Religion contributes to physical and emotional health because it deals with mental states and attitudes. Many human ills, as explained many times in this book, derive from improper thinking.

A physician stated recently that whereas twenty-five years ago only two per cent of stomach disorders, indigestion and affiliated maladies were traceable to mental states, now probably twenty-five per cent of such cases are due to nervous tension or agitation People get sick largely because they cannot control and discipline their minds

People often say that their nerves are "all shot to pieces". This is usually not so, very seldom are their nerves actually damaged The nerve is simply a telephone wire from the brain to a given part of the body. What a person means when he says that his nerves are "all shot to pieces" is not that there is anything wrong with the actual nerve, but that the thoughts which stimulate the nerve are disturbed. These

trust, do you? I know you practise its morals and ethics, but you do not practise your religion in your thought life. Put into mental practice these principles 'Take no thought for the morrow', or 'Let not your heart be troubled'—'Fret not thyself'—'Come unto me, all you that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

It began to dawn on my friend what this wise and kindly doctor meant. Quietly he said "I see what you mean, and you are right. I *will* practise my faith in my thoughts as well as in my actions"

"It's really a great medicine—the greatest tonic of all," said the physician.

There sat my friend that day of our visit, two years later, well and strong. His wife, who sat by, smiled and said. "I told him that for years, and he would not pay attention to me, but went on wearing himself out and becoming a bundle of nerves"

"Well, I'm cured all right," he continued, "and now I'm urging people to practise the gospel for the sure release it will give from tension and fear I urge them to take the greatest medicine of all"

A friend of mine, manager of one of the largest hotels in America, had been commenting upon what he said this country needs, namely, "to get back to the simple principles of religion".

"Why," he said, "if we don't do it everybody is going to crack up. I move about in the lobby of this hotel a good deal, and one learns a lot just by watching people. All you have to do is just to stand and watch people use the revolving doors, and you will see what I mean Why, for some men the whole day is spoiled if they miss one section of that door."

"You mean it annoys them to miss one complete revolution of the door," I remonstrated.

"No, sir," he said; "it used to be that, but now they are so tense, it upsets them to miss just one section. Something must be done or we are all going to be nervous wrecks"

The results of such tension are clearly evident. Pick up any newspaper any day and count the causes of the deaths reported Also observe the age at which men die. If you get past fifty to-day you may live to a ripe old age High blood-pressure, heart failure, maladies of hypertension, these are the sickles that the old man with the long beard uses to cut men down in their prime these days

It is understandable how men break under strain. In

the manufacturing of automobiles the severest test is to drive the car at high speed over a smooth concrete pavement. It would seem that the toughest test would be over a rough road, but on the contrary, high speed over smooth pavement sets up high-frequency vibration which more quickly indicates hidden weaknesses. High tension and agitation in a human being vibrate those hidden weaknesses which cause him to break.

Caruso had a dinner trick which used to delight his fellow diners He would hold aloft between his thumb and forefinger a fragile glass with a long stem He would sing the ascending scale and sound a high note repeatedly The glass would shatter into a hundred pieces

If high-frequency vibration or tension thus affects an automobile or a glass, think what it can also do to our highly organised human personalities and bodies.

In his book, *Release from Nervous Tension*,* Dr David Fink explains the process. He calls attention to "the interbrain". "Nerves," he says, "control all of our organs These nerves are grouped chiefly in one part of the nervous system, and this part of the nervous system is the central control that normally should keep our hearts and stomachs and lungs working in harmony with each other. This nervous centre of our emotional life is called the interbrain. Sometimes it is called the thalamus or hypothalamus. The interbrain is the seat of the emotions. love, hate, fear, rage, jealousy, etc"

Dr. Fink quotes Dr. Harvey Cushing as stating that "emotional storms coming out of the interbrain can cause ulcers of the stomach, palpitation of the heart and other maladies".

The interbrain, says Dr Fink, "sits in the driver's seat". He explains its working. "Above the interbrain is the forebrain, sometimes called the cerebrum. The forebrain which occupies most of the space within your skull is the part of your nervous system that analyses, thinks, decides. It lets you know just what is going on in the world. It is with your forebrain that you read your newspaper Your forebrain interprets the general situation and sends its findings to the interbrain for action and feeling. The interbrain reports the situation back to the forebrain in terms of elation or depression. When you feel calm or happy or sad or depressed, or when you have the jitters or nervous indigestion, you know it

* David Fink, *Release from Nervous Tension* (Allen & Unwin, Ltd.).

because your interbrain has told your forebrain just how it feels."

Dr. Fink sums up "To enjoy good health you must first get right with your interbrain."

Perhaps a man who was sent to me by a physician was having interbrain trouble Over the telephone this physician said. "I am sending a patient to see you. Physically there is nothing wrong with him. All he needs is to get his nerves converted" Perhaps he should have said "He needs to get his interbrain converted." "Show him how to put his trust in God and he will not be so jittery and upset," concluded the doctor

. .

A diffused and general application of religion will not necessarily help to overcome tension No reader should jump to the conclusion that if one goes to church next Sunday, all will be well I certainly advocate going to church next Sunday and every Sunday, but it is essential to do more than sporadically rush into a church in a desperate manner. I know people who have gone to church for years who are still pathetic victims of tension and agitation. The failure lies in the fact that they have never learned how the simple and practical techniques of Christianity may be applied to tension and agitation.

A man who is sick doesn't rush into a medical library and start desperately reading. He sits down with the doctor The doctor examines him and out of his knowledge of those medical books and long years of practice, writes the patient a prescription and gives simple advice to apply to his particular malady. The patient takes the prescription to the chemist He does not think he will be cured by subjecting himself to the aroma of all the medicine in the store. The chemist fills the prescription, giving him a specific medicine. He writes specific instructions on the bottle or box—"Take three times a day as directed." Religious practice should follow similar procedures, diagnosis and specific application of formulæ.

A man came to our church clinic complaining of severe nervousness. He was a manufacturer and was under great stress He drummed his fingers on my desk as he talked.

"Why are you drumming your fingers?" I asked.

"I didn't even know I was drumming them," he replied in some surprise.

"Well," I suggested, "don't drum your fingers. Just let your hand rest on the table in a limp and relaxed manner." I saw that he was sitting rigidly on the edge of his chair, so I urged. "Sit back and relax.

"In what other ways does your nervousness manifest itself?" I inquired.

"I worry about my business all the time. Every time I am away I worry whether my house is going to burn down or something happen to it. I worry about my wife and children wondering if they are going to get hurt."

I gave him a prescription, a little formula to practise. "Just say to yourself, 'Let my house burn'. Is your house insured?" I asked.

"Yes, it is."

"Well," I continued, "say to yourself, 'let it burn' Also say 'I put my wife and children in God's hands; He will take care of them' You must learn a simple technique, you must have the naive genius to follow the greatest of all thinkers who told us that the answers to life's problems lie in childlike or simple attitudes."

He said. "I'll try"

"Good," I said. "Imagine that Jesus Christ is actually by your side. When you start worrying, stop and say: 'Lord, you are with me; everything is all right.' When you go into a restaurant, even if you are with somebody, pull up a chair unostentatiously and imagine that Jesus Christ sits in that chair. When you walk down the street, imagine that you can hear His footfalls, feel His shoulders, see His face When you retire at night, pull up a chair by the bed and imagine that Jesus Christ sits in that chair. Then before you turn out the light have a word with Him and say. 'Lord, I'll not worry, for I know that you are watching over me and will give me peace' "

"Oh," he protested, "that sounds foolish."

"It is merely a simple psychological device to make you feel the presence of Christ, and I have had a great many people use it with excellent results," I explained.

He came back to see me not long ago. He did not drum his fingers. He sat evenly in his chair, there was no nervousness There was a new look on his face "You feel better?" I suggested

"Yes, I do, yes, I do." He hesitated, then said: "I should like to say something to you. You know that business about Christ sitting in chairs, and walking with me?"

I said that I recalled my advice

"Well," he said rather hesitantly, "do you know I honestly believe there is something to it—I believe He is there actually."

He is right. There is something to it.

Another man who came to my office agreed with this finding. He told me that he could not sleep. He was quite haggard, and obviously at the breaking point.

"The trouble is my mind is too agile," he complained. His education was largely scientific, with degrees from an engineering school. He was a man of brilliant mentality, but his mind operated too rapidly for his emotional make-up and did not synchronise with his living

This discrepancy in my visitor reminded me of the incident of the city man who went out to the country and watched a farmer who was sawing a log with long, even, measured strokes This city fellow said impatiently "Here, let me saw the log." He started in with slow, measured strokes, but before long accelerated the tempo. The stroke went crooked, the saw caught.

The city man said: "I guess I didn't do so well, after all."

The farmer replied: "It's because you allowed your mind to get ahead of the saw."

Tension causes men's minds to get ahead of their emotional nature—and dislocation of a perfectly synchronised and correlated personality results. That was true of the man who had come to see me

I asked him to practise a simple spiritual device. "When you go home and go to bed to-night, put a chair by the side of your bed. Imagine that Christ sits in the chair, and when you get ready to go to sleep, look over towards the chair and say 'He giveth his beloved sleep' Then make it personal—'He giveth me (his beloved) sleep.' Believe that Christ will be there watching over you. Then turn out the light and go to sleep"

He said: "I'll try. But it's only imagination, because Christ couldn't be there"

"Try believing it just the same," I suggested

He told me later that for the first four nights nothing happened, and he had just about decided it was a "crack-brained notion", as he put it. "But," he continued, "the fifth night I had a wonderful sleep. And," he paused, "I believe that Christ's presence is more than imagination—it is a fact."

The last time I saw him he said that he still puts the chair

by the bed. Of course, he is resting too heavily upon the symbolism of the chair. But if he can get results by pulling up a chair, it's all right, for back of it is one of the most powerful, one of the most effective, one of the profoundest of all ideas—the idea, namely, that God is with you and that no harm can come to you, that you need not be afraid of anything

. . . . .

The devices for eliminating agitation need not be involved One is to practise taking a detached attitude towards irritating things. Practise lifting your mind above the confusion and irritation around you.

One way to do that is to form mental pictures of great hills or mountain ranges, or the wide sweep of the ocean, or of some great valley spreading out before you. Get a mental picture of the stars serene in the heavens, or of the moon sailing high on a clear, calm night. One can do this while busy at a job. Hang these pictures on the walls of your mind and think about them habitually.

The practice of detachment helps one to remain quiet, peaceful, controlled in the midst of the little tempests of this life' Let me tell you of a few people and the devices or techniques they have successfully employed to overcome agitation.

Just before Christmas one year my wife took me shopping I always try to avoid it, but so far have never yet been able to get through a Christmas season without having to go shopping. She took me to a crowded store, and the counter where we wanted to purchase some articles was the most crowded of all It was literally besieged by women. To my embarrassment, I was the only man in the crowd

I noticed the salesman. He was a tall, easy-going, young fellow who wore the button indicating honourable discharge from military service. He had a very relaxed attitude, even though he was being called on all sides. He gave his attention to the one customer whom he was serving at the moment. It seemed that she had bought three articles, and I was standing close by when he tried to add up the cost She had her eyes glued upon his pencil as he added the column, and you were conscious of a stiff and suspicious attitude on her part. Perhaps this confused him, for he added the column incorrectly, and I was struck by his wholesomeness when with a boyish grin he said "What do you know? Didn't add it right, did I?"

"No, you didn't," she snapped. Dutifully he tried it again, appealing to me meanwhile to help him. Despite my clumsiness in mathematics, we managed this time to get the column correctly added.

Then he flashed her a radiant smile so warm that it thawed even the iciness in her face, and he handed her the package with the statement. "I am a poor mathematician, but believe me, you have got some fine articles there for Christmas. I hope they are going to make the people for whom you have bought them very happy. Merry Christmas!" And with that he turned to the next customer, who happened to be myself.

I discovered that he had been employed recently by a large advertising firm. Before putting him to work they sent him out, as he put it, "to get acquainted with the great American public". He certainly was in a place where he could get acquainted with the public all right and I asked: "How do you like it?"

"Oh," he said, "I like it all right; only why is everybody so angry? They storm around my counter from all directions, and they all seem to be angry. I don't know what they're angry about; I doubt that they know themselves. They are buying Christmas presents to make people happy, and yet they're all angry. But," he added, "I've got a secret, I just don't let it ruffle me I flash a big smile on 'em and treat 'em nicely; it breaks them down—every last one of them"

This young fellow had hit upon a technique for not being agitated. If he holds that throughout his life, he will be a successful man. He got relaxed, gave his attention to one customer at a time, and "flashed a big smile on 'em". In other words, he had mastered the skill of being detached. Thus irritation had no power over him.

Robert Louis Stevenson made a wise statement: "Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened, but go on in fortune or in misfortune at their own private pace like the ticking of a clock during a thunderstorm" That is really a discerning bit of wisdom.

I have a little old farm-house in the country—a place over one hundred and fifty years old We have some old things around that house, including clocks. There's something fascinating about the ticking of a clock, especially in the quiet of the night One of those old clocks is in the dining-room. One day we had a violent hurricane. The

great maples seemed almost to bend double under the driving winds. The rain beat upon the window-panes. The very beams of the house seemed to creak.

But the old clock acted as if there were no storm at all "Tick tock, tick tock," it said calmly. If the clock had been a modern human being, it would have speeded up its tempo as if to cry excitedly "Isn't it a terrible storm? What shall we do, what shall we do?" But the clock was measuring time which is rooted in the centre of the stars. It was measuring decades, generations, eons, not merely excitable little minutes. So, it just went on, "at [its] own private pace".

A man who has cultivated "the peace of God which passeth all understanding", does not get agitated by the little storms of life. His life is rooted in something eternal, so he goes on "at [his] own private pace like the ticking of a clock during a thunderstorm".

The late William Jennings Bryan, one of the greatest orators of our time, had this art perfected. Years ago a friend of mine was with Bryan all one summer. He slept with him in country hotels. He even slept with him on benches in country railway stations. One night they lay down on a couple of baggage trucks somewhere in the Tennessee mountains as they waited for a train. At this time, a certain newspaper was pounding Bryan unmercifully. My friend was wrought up about it. That night he said: "Mr. Bryan, why is it that you don't get worked up and angry and excited about the attacks this newspaper is making on you?"

"What newspaper?" asked Mr Bryan.

"Why," said my friend, "don't you know?" And he named the paper.

"Oh, that one—well, you see, I never read the papers that attack me I only read the others. The papers that attack me do not seem to me to be logical," concluded Bryan with a chuckle

You may say Bryan's was a closed mind? Not at all. Bryan felt that he was right in the position he was taking. He did his best and after that just went on "in fortune or in misfortune . . like the ticking of a clock during a thunderstorm". Had he read the papers that attacked him and allowed himself to become irritated, the next thing he might have done would have been just what they wanted him to do. They wanted him to fight back angrily, knowing

that "whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad" Bryan was a religious man. He had the peace of God inwardly. His enemies could not get him off centre.

Gandhi also practised this formula. He said his plan for living included an abundance of humour, balanced diet, avoidance of all stimulants, adequate sleep, deliberate refusal to be annoyed, disturbed, angered or upset, resignation to the will of God and prayers twice daily.

I have a friend, a public figure who is often attacked quite violently He never shows agitation. "I don't understand you," I said to him one day. "I should think you would sometimes get disturbed because of what they say about you."

"It doesn't bother me," he said.

"Why not?" I asked.

"I have two never-failing sources of peace," he replied. "One, the short stories of Tolstoy; the other, a Book known as the New Testament Do you know," he said shrewdly, "it is a funny thing about this business of speaking unkind things, of speaking ill about a person. Point your finger at me," he said. I did so. "Now, what are the other three fingers doing? Pointing back at you, aren't they? You see, I win three to one." Incidentally, that is a good trick to employ the next time somebody says a mean thing about you. Somebody points one finger at you, but three accusing fingers point back at him.

The person who is organised and calm and controlled in his mind by habitual practise of the formula of faith can live without tension. The secret is to develop the art of detachment, the ability to live above agitation.

One of the surest methods for overcoming agitation is to put yourself in contact with the re-creative process of nature All nature is constantly being re-created Every spring we see it demonstrated The trees, flowers, and grass are attuned to the flow of that energy which is ever present in the earth. When a man is created, he is not set off by himself to run down like a clock that had been wound up He is more like the electric clock which constantly rewinds itself by being connected with automatic and constant energy

The process is described in one of the most astute and remarkable statements in the Bible. "In Him (that is, God) we live and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii, 28). That is to say, if you keep in continuous conscious contact with God in your thoughts and actions, you have life and energy and fulness of being

This may be done by reminding yourself daily that "In Him I am living, in Him I am having new energy, in Him I am realising the fulness of my own being".

Take time every day to affirm that the re-creative process is taking place in you, in your body, in your mind, and in your spirit. A new feeling of aliveness, eagerness, and vitality will come to you by following this simple practice.

A doctor telephoned me and said: "I have a patient for whom I can do no more. He thinks the wrong kind of thoughts. That is your field," the doctor concluded, "and if you will take him over, I will send him down."

I asked the doctor what he would suggest that I could do for his patient, and he answered: "Teach him to think differently. I suggest that you persuade him to commit scripture passages to memory until he fills his mind so full of these healing ideas that the other and destructive ideas are expelled. Of course, you know that you cannot force an idea out of the mind by being willing to do so, but only by putting in a stronger idea can you displace a thought that is causing damage."

I was impressed that an up-to-date physician would make such a simple and yet apparently wise suggestion and determined to try it with the man.

The patient was a resident of Westchester County and was engaged in business in New York City. He had "New Yorkitis", a disease that is a combination of anxiety, haste, tension and panic, all rolled in one. "New Yorkitis" literally shakes people to pieces. It is a product of the high tempo of metropolitan life, and thus not limited to New York City.

Every morning it was this man's habit to come into the city on the 8.29 train, which he barely caught after dashing from his house at 8.28. On the train he read the paper, and got angrier and angrier at what he read. Before he was in the city, he was in a rage. In the evening he would go out on the 5.19, which he caught at 5.18½. Again he read the paper and again he got angry. As a result he was not far from the end of a pretty frayed rope.

He was disgusted when I suggested that the doctor and I both thought the cure lay in committing scripture passages to memory. "So you want me to go back to the primary department," he sneered.

"Yes," I said, "you may have some formal and ethical religion, but as far as knowing the simple techniques of

applying the Christian faith you just don't know how, so we have to start you again with the ABCs."

I explained how our plan would supply new ideas and would gradually expel the agitated thoughts and spread a healing balm of peace and quietness through his mind.

He had a good brain and he got the idea; the simplicity and logic of it appealed to him He agreed that he would carry out the "prescription". As suggested previously, a great mind has the capacity to be simple, in fact, a mind that cannot be simple is not a first-class brain. This is why the greatest Teacher said that if we want to become expert, we must "become as little children", that is, simple, naive, artless.

This man did as directed, and one day about six months later the doctor telephoned and said "Our patient is cured. He has control of himself now. His mental outlook is changed and he feels better in every way. I am again impressed by the amazing re-creative power of simple Christian practice"

Some time later, I made a speech in Buffalo before a large audience It was a hot night and I spoke with vigour. Afterwards, I shook hands with several hundred people. A man tapped me on the shoulder and said that I had barely time to get my train. He rushed me through the city at "breakneck" speed, skidding around corners on two wheels, arriving finally with a great flourish in front of the Lackawanna Station, his brakes screeching.

Carrying two bags, I dashed through the gates which I heard clang behind me as the conductor called "All aboard" I threw my bags on the platform and pulled myself aboard as the train started. I was out of breath, panting and actually shaking. The train was crowded. There was no place to sit down, and the only thing to do was to get into my lower berth Still highly keyed up from the experience of the preceding two hours, I lay in my berth.

Suddenly I became aware of a pain in my arm and around my shoulder. This disturbed me. Then it seemed that my heart was beating too fast. Foolishly, I tried to take my pulse. It appeared to be running about twenty beats too rapidly. The thought came that people die in Pullman berths and I thought "Wouldn't it be terrible to die here in this berth?" A possible newspaper headline "Minister dies in berth," flashed across my mind.

Then I remembered the suggestion that one could quiet

oneself by reading. Unfortunately, the only reading material I had was a book on the foreign policy of the United States, which obviously was not designed to fill the mind with peace. Then it occurred to me that if the prescription I gave to the man from Westchester County worked for him, why wouldn't it work for me too? "Practise what you preach," I said to myself.

So I said quietly to myself a number of scripture passages. Then I recalled that some psychologist had said that it is more effective to verbalise aloud any statement designed to affect the mind, so I began to recite these scripture passages out loud What the man in the upper berth thought of this, I do not know. But I lay there reciting all the scripture verses I could recall which dealt with quietness, peace, faith

Presently I began to feel quieted Drowsiness came over me, and a deep sense of rest seemed to spread throughout my entire body. The next thing I knew it was morning and I was in Hoboken. The route of the Lackawanna railway is tortuous through the mountains of Pennsylvania, but I slept soundly and had to be awakened by the porter.

It was a rainy, dismal, raw morning, not designed to lift the spirit However, as I stood at the prow of the ferry-boat, crossing the river, I noticed the seagulls diving and gliding and it came over me that I had never seen such grace and beauty. I had never observed the loveliness of seagulls before, but now I thought I had never seen anything so exquisite as the graceful way in which the birds slipped down the wind. Suddenly, it occurred to me that everything seemed wonderful and then I realised that I had never felt better in my life. I had a feeling of health, energy, vitality and aliveness that was positively exhilarating I felt deep happiness bubbling up. I caught myself saying "It is wonderful to be alive," and I eagerly looked forward to the responsibilities of the day As a matter of fact, I never had a better day in my life

I became aware that unconsciously I had discovered a law, one of the greatest of all laws—namely, the formula for the re-creation of a human being through the practice of faith. It is a law that can revolutionise your life. It can make the whole world different because it can make you different.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HOW TO ATTAIN MARRIED HAPPINESS

HAPPY married life is possible to those who will apply to themselves a few simple, common-sense principles. The "complications" said to destroy so many modern marriages are not inevitable. In truth, the marriage problem has often been made too involved by the "experts". I have counselled with married couples for a good many years at the heart of America's greatest city, and as a result I am convinced that many marriages which are at what seems a breaking-point can be firmly and permanently held together by the application of the principles outlined in this chapter. These principles are not advanced as theoretical propositions. They are stated as the laboratory result of working with hundreds of couples in the confidential relation of a spiritual adviser.

The function of a counsellor is not to consider the problems of dispute between a husband and wife and attempt to settle them sagely out of some superior wisdom. Even were he able to exercise perfect judgment and contribute the soundest possible advice, still in most cases, the cleavages which cause the dispute would remain. When a marriage comes to the point of serious disagreement, it probably cannot be settled entirely on the basis of logic or judicial discussion. Some positive treatment must be given to the basic causes which have thrust a husband and wife into warring camps, the one against the other.

I am not much concerned about a moderate amount of disagreement or even bickering, for it is not unnatural that a certain amount of conflict should exist between human beings living in close proximity I have never been impressed by the statement often made that a husband and wife have lived together for, let us say, forty years, and never had a cross word Ignoring the question of whether the assertion is true, it still remains that it would be a rather dull existence for two people to live together on such an insipid plane that there never would be any argument. A good, robust difference of opinion strenuously engaged in is not bad for human beings provided they never let the sun go down on their wrath. If they carry over from one day to another accumulated irritations arising from personal

disagreement, serious division may ultimately develop Battle the issues out if you must, but get them settled and forgive any sharpness before you go to sleep for the night Let the passing of each day witness a unanimity of spirit, regardless of the divisions of opinion which may have occurred during the day

While it is the custom of this day to rationalise most marriage failures on the basis that the partners were not by nature adjustable to one another, the fact remains that most could have been adjusted had they taken the situation in hand and corrected a few simple faults. For example, one of the most basic drives in human nature is the craving to be appreciated. No less a person than William James so declares

William James was one of the most distinguished scholars in American history Considering the importance and extent of his works, he may be regarded as one of the greatest minds America ever produced. He was an eminent philosopher and was one of the early pioneers in the science of psychology. In one period of his life, William James had a long and protracted illness, in the course of which a friend sent him a potted azalea, together with words of personal appreciation. In making reply to this kindly gift, the distinguished philosopher-psychologist said it had reminded him of an immense omission of which he had found himself guilty in writing his immortal work on psychology He had discovered to his chagrin that he had omitted from his textbook the deepest quality of human nature—namely, the craving to be appreciated

Let husbands and wives get that fact fixed in their minds and never forget it. Indeed they should constantly remind themselves that *every person craves to be appreciated.* Govern yourself accordingly and you have nipped much married trouble at its root.

The husband who accomplishes some achievement in his business wants appreciation from his wife. When he has worked hard all day long and comes home tired, it is a serious mistake for his wife to take it all for granted. She should tell him how she appreciates him as a husband and as an individual It is easy to say· "I'm proud of you." It will do wonders for him.

If the dinner is good, let the man appreciate it and *say so* If it isn't good, do *not* say so but find something else to appreciate Live in hope, it may be better next time. Think

appreciation rather than criticism. If there has to be criticism, set up a family conference and get everything out on the table, but don't snip and snarl and condemn and look askance. Do not develop the habit of seeing the things that are wrong. Condition your attention to the things that are right and appreciate them, *and say so*, and say so *often*. It will do her a world of good.

And now down to cases . . .

A young woman, obviously in great mental distress, came to consult me. She was seriously considering leaving her husband, she said.

From her story, it soon developed that all she needed was a little ordinary appreciation Some more profound authority might call it affection, but to me it seemed simpler than that.

I talked with the husband, who said. "Oh, she would never leave me."

"Don't be so sure of that," I said

He looked stunned "Why, she could not do that. What could I ever do without her?"

"Did you ever tell her that you couldn't do without her?" I asked.

"Why, no," he answered, "I don't like that kind of talk, and besides she knows it, anyway."

"She may know it, but she wants to have it told to her just the same"

"Why?" he said.

"Don't ask me why," I replied "That is just the way of women" (But it isn't only women, all of us have the deep craving to be appreciated which William James spoke about)

"Have you by any chance brought her flowers or candy lately?"

He was a huge, clumsy-looking fellow.

"Now, wouldn't I look fine lugging home flowers? I would look like a fool, me carrying flowers," he snorted.

"Just the same," I replied, "my professional prescription in this situation is to invest in some flowers and tell her you cannot get along without her."

Grudgingly, he agreed to do it and, as it later proved, that attitude was all that was needed It broke up the growing coolness between them, dissipated misunderstanding and stimulated the original strong affection that basically existed between them

I realise that this may appear to be over-simplification, and I am aware that in serious marriage disagreement, this may not be effective, but in the early stages simple appreciation is one of the most important of principles relating to married happiness

Great issues develop from small beginnings A lack of appreciation which reveals itself in commonplace things may grow until it becomes a very great divisive factor. It may even come to be an almost insurmountable barrier.

A case was brought to me by a wife who travelled several hundred miles to talk about her marriage which she said was crumbling. In fact, she and her husband had been living apart for some time, but there was sufficient desire on the part of both to hold the marriage together to cause them to agree to meet in New York and to visit our church clinic to lay their problems before us.

The couple were in their mid-thirties Of good families, they were college graduates and were extraordinarily intelligent people It developed that the man had engaged in several extra-marital affairs which he brazenly and rather cruelly described in the presence of his wife, since at that particular point I was seeing them together. He later attempted to impress me with the fact that one woman with whom he had developed what he called a "beautiful love affair" and whom he had described as a paragon of virtue, was, as he finally admitted, not quite so classic in her purity.

In private conversation with the husband, I asked him to be objective, to lay aside emotional reactions as far as possible, and tell me what he thought was the reason he and his wife first began to drift apart. To my astonishment, he opened up a vigorous tirade against his wife on the basis of her alleged poor housekeeping, plus personal dowdiness. His complaint was that she did not think enough of him (that is, did not appreciate him enough) to care properly for the home. It seemed that she enjoyed going out with "the girls". These girls were her college friends and they had together developed a craze for bridge-playing. It was their habit to gather in some convenient place for lunch and play all afternoon This happened several afternoons each week.

Late in the afternoon she would dash home and throw together a few things, ending up with an obviously improvised dinner Often the beds were not made until time to retire The clutter which normally accumulates in a

home was allowed to remain. This, he said, was more than he could stand. "I may be fussy, but when I come home, I think I have a right to find the place at least straightened up, a decent meal on the table and certainly the beds made."

Apparently he was a rather meticulous fellow. "Before I was married," he declared, "my bed was better made than after I married her." Moreover, he complained "Why in the name of heaven can't a woman keep her petticoat out of sight? It hangs down all the time."

While I sympathised with him and shared his views on both housekeeping and petticoats, I found it necessary to remind him that when he married this woman, he did not hire her as a housekeeper. I pointed out that he made a contract to live with her not as a man with a housekeeper but as a man with his wife, that they were supposed to become as one, sacred partners for life. I also pointed out that the two little boys had nothing to say about being brought into the world by him in partnership with his wife, and that he was simply the breaker of a contract, giving no thought to the two boys or to his own sacred agreement, but thinking only of his own comfort and nicety of his life.

The discussion revealed that he still had a strong attachment for his wife, though there was considerable acidity in their relationship.

Later in talking with the wife, I noticed that he was right, the petticoat did show. Her hair was rather frazzled. She was basically nice looking, but no care had been exercised in her dress. I asked her if she liked housekeeping. Her answer left no room for doubt. "I positively hate it," she declared. One chief trouble with her husband was that he didn't make enough for her to have a maid, she complained.

I pointed out to her that when they were married, there was nothing in the marriage contract about her having a maid. Furthermore, I told her she was young enough to work hard in the home and that hard work would do her good. I asked her if she went out with the "girls" and she said she "certainly did". I raised the question why once a week wouldn't be sufficient for her bridge parties with "the girls". I also politely suggested that she pull up her petticoat and that she make the beds the first thing after breakfast and pick up the newspapers and sweep the place out. I told her that while I was no housekeeper, still I knew that if she would budget her time and activities, she could do up the place in no time at all.

She wanted to know why a minister from whom she expected some spiritual counsel laid all this stress on how she fixed her hair, on why she didn't pull up her petticoat and on being a better housekeeper I replied that those matters seemed to be the trouble points

He had a 'few" deficiencies which he admitted and with which we dealt. The interviews ended by mutual pledges that the simple principle of appreciation would be applied and that these obvious deficiencies would be corrected.

Inasmuch as this chapter may be read by persons whose marriage has ended in divorce, I want to say something to help them adjust to that situation Often such an experience may result in a severe shock to the personality. It can wreck one's life and totally blot out happiness. But there is an answer to even this tragic situation, as the young woman discovered who wrote the following very moving letter to the author.

> I want to tell you that your book* has saved my life and reason, and brought Christ Jesus into my tortured brain and starved soul and breaking heart I certainly needed Him as much as any other human being alive. You have also saved me from a nervous breakdown.
>
> My background was religious, but when I got to college I dropped all interest in anything but the pleasures in this material world, and I guess I have been practically an atheist since, believing only in the Golden Rule. If I had only had a personal faith and lived by it I can see that my life would not have been in the turmoil that it has been.
>
> When I was twenty-five I was married, happily for five years, and had one son—when I was thirty my husband deserted me spiritually for a young girl of nineteen—I tried for ten years to keep my home together, not knowing what else to do or where to turn—he stuck to her for five years, during which time I was so afraid of him I didn't dare make an issue of it. If I had only gone to a man of God who could have helped me! After that we never found each other, and hardly spoke, and in 1916 I was so exhausted with his mental cruelty that I gave up and got a divorce in order to save my brain and spirit.
>
> Later I found out that he was engaged to this same

* *The Art of Living*

girl, and in the flash of an eye all my old love came back—it was as if the agony of ten years didn't exist—and with my love came emotions of hatred, revenge, jealousy and rage—a sickening fear made me physically ill so that I couldn't eat or sleep, and I became weak and dizzy—by the fourteenth day I knew I would have to call a doctor, although I knew that a doctor couldn't cure my fear and breaking heart I was pacing around the room, and said to my sister: "I've got to get some help from somewhere." On trying to get my mind off my terror I picked up a copy of your book—as I started to read, somehow I felt better—the chapter on fear helped me so much, and somehow all of a sudden I seemed to feel safe—and as if I wasn't alone—then like a rushing torrent it came over me—this is the answer—the blessed Lord Jesus—where have I been all these years of nightmare, fear, agony and destruction of spirit? Then I read your marvellous sentence "Christianity is not a creed to be recited but a power to be tapped" And I remembered the Bible verse. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." These two thoughts stayed with me, *power* and *reassurance*—I talked with my sister about it, and as I looked into her beautiful blue eyes, filled with love and compassion and tears, I knew I had found HIM.

After that I was able to eat and sleep, and while those dreadful thoughts of desire for murder, bitterness, grief and heart-ache kept coming back, I would look to heaven and keep my mind on Christ's love and sacrifice, and in the past month they have gradually disappeared. I have been praying constantly for grace and goodness, reading the Bible a great deal and my mind is healed. Aside from that I feel that I have discovered something marvellous, which will sustain me through whatever life brings in time to come And I see my husband, not as a heartless brute, but as an unhappy and desolate man, also looking for comfort and help all these years, and now trying to find it in another woman's arms instead of in the right place This thought has helped to take away the bitterness, and left in its place a feeling of compassion, and a sincere wish for his happiness. I know that if he can ever find God he will come back to me, because we had a wonderful love and we both love our son dearly. I have no way of helping him, except through prayer, as he is very bitter about the embarrassment

of the divorce and will not see me, but perhaps God will show him the way, if it be His *will*—if not, I know I can carry on, and will be useful to my boy and others

Another principle of basic importance in preserving married happiness is to decide how much you love your children. The husband of a famous Hollywood motion picture actress said to me, when some of the Press agents of Hollywood first suggested his wife's divorce, and I might say even instigated it (though without deliberate intent), that there could be no divorce because, he exclaimed "We have the baby and can we cut the baby in two?"

His expression is well taken, for that is exactly what frequently happens to the children of a broken home They are not cut in two physically, but they often are emotionally. Out of a long experience in a religio-psychiatric clinic, I can state that many of the adults with whom I have worked on the matter of divided personality or inner conflicts, or haunting fear and inferiority attitudes, were made so because they were the children of broken marriages Instead of selfishly thinking of themselves, let parents give thought to the future of their children. The sense of responsibility ought to have some weight with people of character Perhaps if parents actually knew what their children think, it might help them to avoid some mistakes which wreck home life and cause agony. In the last analysis the children are of first and final importance to a man and wife; that is, if husband and wife are real people When a child comes to a couple, he is of more importance than their own personal "happiness" (this word used in the Hollywood manner).

One day years ago a young boy came to see me. He was fourteen or fifteen, and was very nervous He was on the verge of tears. As he clasped and unclasped his hands the blood came and went at his knuckles.

"I must talk to you," he blurted out "I can't talk to my mother nor to my sister. I haven't anybody to talk to. I must talk to you."

"Go ahead, son, what is it?" I said "You can talk to me. Tell me anything that is on your mind."

"Well," he said, with great hesitancy, "I want to ask you —is—is—is my dad all right?"

"What do you mean, son, is your dad all right?"

"I mean," he stammered, "is he straight? What they say

about him isn't so, is it? Please tell me the truth," he demanded.

"I admire your father very much. I do not know anything bad about him. What is on your mind?"

"Well," he said, "at school they kind of laugh at him and whisper—they have got him mixed up with some woman. Oh, gee, that isn't so, is it?"

The boy was obviously broken-hearted and suffering intense agony. So I said to him: "I don't think so, son, but even if it is, you have to act like a man."

"Shall I tell my mother about it?" he asked, "or shall I go to my father?"

"No," I answered, "don't tell your mother and you can't talk to your father about a thing like that. Just pray for him and keep on believing in him. Keep on loving him and having faith in him."

I did nothing about it for a few days, but it troubled me. I did not want to believe it either, but I began to have my doubts, so I thought it was my duty to see this father. Naturally he was very angry and told me it was none of my business. That attitude I expected.

I said to him: "I only came to you because of this boy of yours. I just want to tell you how your boy feels." I told him of my interview with his son, and said: "You are going to lose this lad if you are not careful. Your name is being tossed about in a way that humiliates the boy. You can get angry with me all you please, but I am just warning you. You had better give it some thought. Do you want the boy or the woman?"

He did not answer but sat at his desk, sullen, angry, face ashen, trying to control himself.

A few days later he came to me and said: "Well, I guess I had better get it off my chest. Yes, it is so. I really did no want to do it, but I did. Now I am in it and I am caught. I guess I'm a dirty dog and I hate myself. My wife is the finest woman in the world." Then he turned to me with a look of fear and almost fiercely said: "My boy doesn't believe this story, does he?"

"Not now," I answered, "because I told him it wasn't so. At the time, I really did not think it was."

"Well," he answered, "what can we do about it? We've got to do something."

"There is only one thing you can do about it," I said, "and that is quit it, quit it right off. Break with it instantly

and then decide to lead a different life. That is all. Just quit it and get straightened out"

One Sunday about six months later I received this family as members of the church. They stood in front of the altar, the father, mother, sister and the boy. I do not know to this day how many of them ever knew the story. They never mentioned it to me, but I have never seen anybody happier than that boy that day. I can see his face yet as he stood there struggling to keep back tears, but his smile! It was like sunshine through rain

That was years ago. The boy is grown up now and is a man in his own right. The sister is married and has her own family, and the father and mother are at home alone, but they are living together in deep happiness Their hair is turning grey now, but strangely enough every happiness and joy and success has come to them Theirs is a religious home, and they are very proud of their boy, and you should see how proud he is of them, especially of his father, who obviously has always been and is now and ever shall be his idol. The boy has turned out to be a great success in life, a magnificent personality, but had that home broken up. I am convinced it would have broken him also. Marriages that break, very frequently break the children, and there is no escaping this fact One can never live that guilt down It will haunt one in the subconscious mind. It will sour "happiness" It is something to think about as one strives towards married happiness Think seriously about this matter and perhaps you can solve your differences.

As might be expected, this author believes that personal religion and religion in the home is the best of all answers to the problem of married happiness. The author is joined in this belief by psychiatrists, social workers, judges, and others whose occupations bring them into contact with marital problems

And well we should be concerned, for during the year 1945 there was one divorce for every three marriages in the United States This compares with a rate of roughly one to six before World War II and one to nine just before World War I. In some communities there are now as many divorces as marriages.*

A Philadelphia newspaper recently carried a symposium

* The figures are by the Commission on Marriage and the Home and by the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America as quoted in *The Christian Advocate* for March 20, 1947

on the alarming divorce situation During the particular week under discussion the Marriage Bureau issued 533 marriage licences, and for the same period the courts handed down 236 divorce decrees. The newspaper stated "You don't have to be a viewer-with-alarm to get excited over statistics like those Something is happening to the sacred institution of matrimony, not only in Philadelphia but all over America, for the divorce rate is skyrocketing everywhere. Attribute it to post-war social upheaval, if you will, or blame it on Hollywood influence. The fact remains that an astounding number of couples to-day do not look upon marriage as the permanent affair our parents and grandparents did."

The newspaper called upon two distinguished judges of the city, both of whom have passed on thousands of divorce cases to express their opinion on the subject. After analysing the various reasons for divorce, one judge said. "I blame it primarily on a lack of religion. Where there is no religion, there is no civic or social responsibility. Where there is no social responsibility, there is no family responsibility, and lacking that everything goes out of the window"

The other judge stated "Over-indulgence in alcoholic beverages is a cause of disagreement in a large percentage of divorce cases that come before my court."

Apparently also many business men hold the same opinion regarding the value of religion, first in preventing and second in settling marriage difficulties. The head of personnel of one of the largest businesses in America telephoned me one day saying· "I have a young man and his wife here in my office and I wonder if you would be good enough to talk with them. This young man," he explained, "has been working for our company as head of our branch office in another city Recently he has plunged into rather serious trouble. We, here, at the home office must in the circumstances remove him as our representative in that particular city. In fact, we had it in mind to discharge him, but before doing so, because of his wife, we would like to give him another chance. We are unable to decide whether we are justified in giving him another opportunity Before arriving at a final decision my associates and I are requesting you to interview this young couple and give us your reaction."

This prominent personnel man brought the young husband and wife to my office for the interview.

"Well," I asked, "what is the trouble? I am here to help you, so tell me all about it."

To which the young man replied. "I had to come to New York to see the big bosses. They wanted to see me."

"What about?" I asked.

"Well," he answered, "things weren't going so well."

"Why not?" I queried

"I got into trouble," he replied.

"What kind of trouble?" I asked.

His wife then spoke up: "Go on and tell him."

"Well," he said, "in our business we have a great many young women. I did wrong."

I said: "With one of the girls?"

He confirmed my suspicion and continued: "They called me up here and said it had created such a scandal they would have to let me go I brought my wife along with me At the office they said that I was a bad influence and that I had lost my discipline in the organisation. They are now deciding whether to give me another chance in a different branch in some other city. I don't know whatever made me do it, but I told them I was going outside to tell my wife. They said that was my responsibility. I went out and told her. It was a terrible experience, but I told her all about it."

"How long ago did you tell her?" I asked.

He said · "A half-hour ago."

"Well, what did the officers of your firm say then?"

"They sent me over to see you," he replied.

I turned to the wife · "Is there anything more you want to know?"

"Yes," she answered, "I want to know if this is the only time"

"Yes, it is the only time," he replied.

But I didn't believe him and said. "You had better tell us everything, get the whole business straightened out right now, let's get it over Tell us of every time This operation has to be performed, so let's get at it."

To which he earnestly replied: "That is all. I pledge to you before God that this is the only time I have been unfaithful to my wife"

I then turned to the young woman and said · "Is there anything more you want to ask? Ask every question now because before you leave this room, I want you to promise me you will never ask him another question about it. Your

mind must not dwell on this thing for your own future happiness and your future relationship with each other."

She asked a few questions and he answered them fully.

I then asked him. "Do you want to be a good man?"

He replied: "I do with all my heart"

I then asked "Do you love this girl?"

His answer was firm. "Yes."

I then asked her. "Do you love him?"

She countered with "I find it difficult to say yes But down deep I do"

I then suggested that we pray Without my instructing them to do so, they went down on their knees. I said to the husband "You pray." He looked at me despairingly, but I reiterated. "Go on, you must pray." There was a long, long silence, and then he started to pray, slowly, hesitantly, with great embarrassment and then all of a sudden with a veritable gushing out of everything that had been pent-up in his mind It was a complete purging of the soul. It moved me profoundly, but not half so much as when she started to pray. She fought with her inmost soul before my eyes, in the hearing of my ears such a battle of faith I had never heard before That broke me up even more.

When the atmosphere cleared and they stood up before me in one of the most primitive and basic human relationships, they looked each other straight in the eye and searched each other's eyes It seemed to me that they stood so for minutes and that my presence was quite forgotten Then she said to him "If we have faith in God and in each other, we can build again."

Before they left my office I had to say to this young wife "I have met many great people in my time, but I want to say to you, young lady, that you are one of the greatest human beings I ever met" And to the boy I said "You ought to thank Almighty God that He gave you such a woman as this." Her words have haunted me ever since—for it is the great answer to all such problems—"If we have faith in God and in each other, we can build again."

In this situation, faith gave the wife sufficient control to hold her steady in a terrific crisis into which without warning she was plunged It also enabled the young husband to be entirely honest with himself, a ruthless honesty which precluded any attempt at rationalisation. He had done wrong and he knew it, and he said so quite frankly His faith had provided him with a sharp perception of the

exact line of demarcation between good and bad. He did not debate with himself or with his wife or with me whether he had done right or wrong. He knew. Many people who flounder in such a situation do so either because they do not know what is right or wrong or else they attempt to dispute the matter not only with others, but, what is more tragic, they dispute it with themselves. Religious faith gives you a clear knowledge and understanding You just *know* what is right and what is wrong In the vernacular. "You don't kid yourself"

So being honest with yourself you get to the bottom of the trouble at once The Christian faith of these two people also helped them to believe that no matter what had happened, it could be put behind them, that having cleared the matter up, they could build again Such people having a deep faith realise that there are no hopeless situations. He is a wise man who builds up some real faith for himself against crises which may come.

. . . . .

I cannot advocate too strongly that marriages be built upon spiritual foundations One of the wisest statements ever made is that solemn assertion in the Bible "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it" (Psalm 127, 1) This statement is from the Book which reveals more precise knowledge about people than any other book in history It simply states a solemn and irrevocable fact that you cannot build a successful marriage upon any other basis than the principles of love, beauty, forbearance, mutual respect and faith taught by Christianity

It is very significant when you think about it that, in the olden days, families had family prayers in the home. Until recently, family prayers were one of the characteristic features of happy home life. The divorce rate has climbed ever since people generally gave it up This fact seems to be more than a coincidence. Marriages were consecrated in prayer Husband and wife prayed together and had grace at the table When the children came, it was made a family prayer period. It did something to people. It taught them how to live together and it kept them free from those mistakes which destroy marriage. Unconsciously over the years it built up character, a sturdy kind of character which moulded a great free people and preserved their institutions of freedom.

Over a period of years I have found that when you can get a couple to pray together from the very day they are married, the surest preventative to marriage difficulties has been found. I would go so far as to say that I do not know of a single couple who have practised this who have not had happiness in marriage. It will restore married happiness to people whose marriages seem to be entering upon difficulties.

Here is a convincing illustration A young woman came for an interview She was quite distressed and told me that her married life was rapidly approaching the breaking-point. I gathered from what she said that the fault was largely her husband's. The counsellor, however, must always keep balanced, remembering there are always two sides Finally, we made her feel that perhaps she had some responsibility about the situation Her husband, it seemed, was given to violent outbursts of temper and profanity. She pictured him as a very irritable man with whom to live. I asked if there was any religious atmosphere in the home and she acknowledged that there was none at all.

"Oh," she said, "my husband does talk a great deal about God, but not in the way you mean."

I outlined to her my theory that when a husband and wife pray together, they lift their problems above bickering into a region where quarrels fade away and where peace and understanding endure

"Do you ever return thanks at the table in your home?" I asked.

"No," she replied, "when I was at home with my mother and father as a little girl they had grace at the table. I did learn a little prayer of grace from my father, one that he often used, but since we have been married, we have never prayed together and have never returned thanks at the table, although we are members of a church" (They never went to church except at Easter)

"Why not begin the practice?" I asked. "When you sit down to dinner to-night, just say to your husband. 'Jim, I sort of feel I would like to return thanks Do you mind?' Do not be strained or self-conscious or pious about it, just do it and then start talking about something else."

She seemed very doubtful and hesitant, but finally agreed to apply this prescription to their matrimonial situation Later, she told me what happened Her husband solemnly sat down to the table and glumly started to eat. She said,

softly: "Jim, I sort of feel like I would like to return thanks, do you mind?"

Astonishment spread over his features, but he said nothing. This went on for two or three nights. He listened to his wife's voice in prayer. Perhaps he detected a tone he had not heard in a long while. One night he growled "Who is the head of this house, anyway? I am going to return thanks myself."

Presently it got so that when they were discussing their problems, it seemed quite natural to pray about them. The atmosphere of the home gradually changed. Bickering and argument waned and both the husband and the wife have told me that it is next to a miracle the way in which this simple practice provided the basis for happy married life.

In a certain American city, a man said they had one of the most beautiful suburbs in the country. He insisted that we drive out to see it. His appraisal was correct; two or three hundred acres of the most beautifully landscaped terrain were dotted by lovely homes, each one architecturally picturesque. The residents of these homes were the leading younger married people of the city; leading, that is, from the standpoint of position and money. The man waxed enthusiastic over these houses, particularly about the fact that they contained the finest home bars that he had ever seen. It appeared that each home owner vied with his neighbour as to who could have the most attractive bar in his house.

I asked if these people were church-goers, to which he replied with surprise: "Oh no, very few of them go to church, except at Easter maybe."

I asked if their parents had been church people.

"Oh yes, almost without exception, the former generation were religious people"

"Well," I asked, "did their fathers and mothers have bars as nice as these bars?"

"Oh, my, no," he said, "they didn't have bars"

"That is strange," I commented. "I can't imagine any well-regulated household not having a bar!"

Then I inquired as to the marriage status of these people—whether there were many divorces among them.

"Of course," he replied, "most of them have been divorced In fact, only three or four are living with their first wife or first husband." Then he whispered, surreptiti-

ously "There are lots of goings on around here that wouldn't look good in print."

"Pretty risqué, if you ask me," he confided

I do not want to exaggerate, but one wonders if we have arrived at the time when the family altar has given way to the family bar. In moments of sober reflection, every American must ask himself what is going to happen to the country that substitutes the family bar for the family altar? Is there any relation between the break-up of the family and the entrance of liquor into the family in this dominating manner? The reader must decide this question for himself on the basis of the evidence. "Which will hold a marriage together and develop children of character—the family altar or the family bar?"

Many so-called expert solutions of marriage difficulties are offered to-day. Innumerable articles are written on "What is happening to marriage". Everybody is becoming intensely concerned about the break-up of the family. America was built upon certain institutions, principally the home, the church, and the school. If the home collapses, what will happen to American civilisation? Cicero said: "The empire is at the fireside."

Basically, there is one principle for married happiness and the establishment of an enduring home, and that is an atmosphere of religion in the family. Whatever your religion may be—Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish—put it into practice in your home It is amazing how the difficulties that make for marital and family happiness will disappear.

A marine engineer who had been to sea for twelve years married a young widow who had one son He had never been compelled to adjust to any family or business situation The wife, widowed at twenty, had for ten years carried on her husband's business in a man's world. She supported herself, her son and her mother by this business The mother lived with them in a tiny apartment and worked in the office of her daughter's business

The young widow met the marine engineer in a service club during the war They were quickly married, but for the first six months never had more than two days together at a time, these being when he was in port. The war ended and they started life together. He began to take over the business which she owned and had operated. He moved into the already overcrowded apartment. In fact, he was

moving into a new world in every way. Both the husband and the wife were high-grade people, but adjustments seemed so difficult that people said "It can't be done." The couple, too, were becoming sure that they had made a mistake. They were fed up, regretted the marriage and were at breaking-point.

During this time, they attended church regularly. They became interested in a young married couples' group at the church. One day they frankly shared their problems and defeats with another couple who from experience had learned how spiritual faith can remake and enrich marriage. This other young couple challenged them to stop the practice of constantly looking at the problems in their situation and in each other that caused or aggravated the condition and instead to start definitely asking for God's help.

They were also challenged to examine themselves honestly, to see what was wrong in their own attitudes and to deal positively with resentments and fears. They began to replace these faults with understanding, patience and faith. They were urged to seek spiritual changes in themselves, and thus through changing themselves, to change the situation.

They admitted they had tried everything but God; they had even been to a psychiatrist. The idea of God as a personal friend and positive factor in the situation, the idea that He would be concerned with the details of their lives, was entirely new to them.

The joined the other young couple in praying audibly and asked that the above change take place. They "surrendered" themselves to God's will. One week later in a small group they related that a miracle had happened and indeed their personal appearance confirmed it. They seemed to be completely released and obviously were in love in a deeper way New confidence came to the husband which immediately affected and changed his business contacts, resulting in an amazingly fine order. New joy radiated the personality of the wife.

The began at once to practise in the home morning and evening prayer periods, during which they asked for answers to the daily problems that confronted them Both prayed audibly They instituted the practice of a quiet period during which they said they were listening for God's guidance. They adopted the practice that when a business problem confronted them, instead of each belligerently tell-

ing the other what ought to be done, they sought jointly in prayer to find the Christian way to deal with it.

When problems arise with the teen-age boy, the wife's son, they sit down with him and all three read from the Bible, pray together and seek the best way to meet the problem. There is no longer division or jealousy in their decisions with the boy, but instead an attitude of team-work prevails, all three of them being on the "home team". This couple are so completely filled with this new spirit that they positively believe it can solve any problem. They are constantly and eagerly helping other couples who have missed domestic peace, enlightening them on the marvellous way in which it can be obtained They are sure they have a formula which will guarantee to any husband and wife the enjoyment of married happiness.

Proceeding inductively from our clinical case histories, let me close with a few simple and practical procedures for creating a spiritual atmosphere in the home·

1. Get in the habit of saying a pleasant thing as the first words you speak in the morning. Say something of a happy and constructive nature. That will set the mental and emotional tone for the day.
2. Everybody in the home should get up five minutes earlier and utilise those extra minutes for silent prayer—*everybody* at the table for this period. Then let one member of the family offer a few words of prayer. This serves to control the usual hectic start of the day's work
3. Find one of the early morning religious radio programmes which seems helpful. *Sit down quietly* and listen to it.
4. Say grace at lunch. If the wife is alone, let her have a quiet moment of meditation thanking God for her family and asking for guidance.
5. At dinner, say grace Make a rule that no problems, worries or resentments shall enter into the table conversation. Make anyone who so offends drop a coin into a box
6. At the close of the meal let one member of the family read a few verses of scripture Vary this occasionally with an inspiring poem or a stimulating paragraph from a spiritual book Let the one who prays thank God for the other members of the family by name.

7. Don't get glum when you do this. A sour expression does not denote religion. Gaiety does.
8. Take the whole family to church on Sunday and sit together in a "family pew".
9 Keep good religious literature on the home reading-tables.
10 Keep a Bible on your night table and drop a few great texts into your mind before going to sleep. Psychologists say that what you think about in the last five minutes before sleep has a deep effect on your consciousness. Thank God for all the blessings of the day Then as you turn out the light, repeat these words "He giveth his beloved sleep." Then believe that God is giving you deep and refreshing sleep and it will be so.

Write it above the fireplace in every home and engrave it on the mind of every husband and wife in the land—"EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE, THEY LABOUR IN VAIN THAT BUILD IT."

CHAPTER TWELVE

HOW TO MEET SORROW

WHY should a book on success and happiness contain a chapter dealing with the technique of meeting sorrow? The obvious answer is that sorrow cannot be escaped. Sorrow is a great shock and its effect on anyone, one way or another, is profound It may make one a bigger and finer person, or it may cloud the mind and dull the spirit. It may dissipate enthusiasm and destroy incentive. In short, one must know how to meet sorrow, how to summon courage and carry on. What can a person in sorrow get hold of that will preserve the values of his life?

The late Ernie Pyle, famous war correspondent, wrote a moving story of his walk on the beaches of Normandy late on the afternoon of D-Day. The sand was strewn with the personal effects of American boys, who early that morning had landed in a history-shaping invasion. Scattered about were touching little personal keepsakes, snapshots, books, letters. Beside the body of one boy he found a guitar,

and by another a tennis racket. Touching thought—American boys going into battle, even then irrepressible tourists as in the days of peace, taking along tennis rackets and guitars

Alongside the body of one lad, he saw half buried in the sand an issue Bible. Ernie Pyle picked up the Bible, walked a half mile with it, then walked back and laid it down where he found it. "I don't know why I picked it up," he said, "or why I put it back down"

Perhaps he thought vaguely he would send it to the parents of the boy to comfort them. Perhaps he returned the Bible to the spot where he found it because dimly he felt that the boy, having died in this faith, the Book ought to remain for ever with him.

Whatever his reasons, the incident suggests that in the solemn questions of life and death, there is only one Book that has the answers that satisfy our minds and give understanding and comfort. People gain great victory over sorrow by means of their faith.

I sat with a prominent business man in his beautiful home His wife was dead and he was in deep grief. About his house was all that wealth could provide of beauty and loveliness Costly rugs were on the floor, exquisite pictures and hangings on the walls. But what did it all matter? A beloved wife was gone and a man whom I knew to be a strong leader in the business world was broken with grief.

What he told me in the intimate friendship of that hour of sorrow was impressive. He was a man of somewhat austere mien with no outward evidence of sentiment in his nature—a typical aggressive and efficient business man of the sort that compels respect and gains dominance. Within his home, however, he was dependent, leaning upon his wife, who had been almost a mother to him. He was shy about social contacts, and much preferred to remain at night quietly in his home reading, his wife knitting, or reading, at the opposite side of the table. Like many men of similar type, he was a boy never quite grown up, but putting on a strong front before the world.

"I've found something in religion that I never felt before," he said quietly. "Last night I knelt by my bed as usual to pray. I've done this every night since I was a boy. When I was married forty years ago," he continued, "my wife and I agreed to pray together every night We would kneel by

the side of the bed and she would pray out loud. I couldn't do that," he explained, "and anyway she was much better at it, and I always felt God would listen to her."

Rather shyly he said that he would hold his wife's hand as she prayed. Like two simple-hearted children they were. God must have looked with delight upon them, judging from the way he blessed them.

"Well," he went on, "we did that all these years and then —then God took her away, and last night I knelt alone. Out of long habit I put my hand out for hers, but it was not there. It all came over me then how I missed her and loved her, and I wanted her so badly I could hardly bear it. I felt as I did long ago when I was a boy and was scared and wanted my mother. I put my head down on the bed-side and I guess for the first time in my life I really prayed. I said: 'O God, I've heard about people really finding you and I believe you do help people. You know how much I need you. I put my life in your hands. Help me, dear Lord.'"

He looked me full in the face, and his eyes were filled with wonder as he said: "Do you know what happened?" His words came slowly. "Suddenly I felt a touch on my hand, the hand she always held. It was a strong, kindly touch, and I seemed to feel a great hand take my own. In surprise I looked up, but, of course, could see no one. However, all the pain seemed to go out of my mind and peace came into my heart. I knew that God was with me and would never leave me, and that she is with me, too." So he concluded with determination in his voice.

This man had discovered a basic fact taught by Christianity, that fact is that *what seems to be death is not death at all*. Apparently, Jesus Christ did not think of death as we think of it. As he stood by the body of a little girl, he said: "Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth." When He came to the bereaved household of Lazarus, He informed them: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." It would seem that death to Him is a condition of sleep. In His teaching actual death is something more sinister than physical death. He teaches that the body is only a temporary house for an eternal soul. Apparently death in the mind of Jesus Christ means death of the soul. He said: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death" (i e, for the soul). Historically as civilisations become pagan they tend to increase emphasis upon the

body as the ultimate value. The teaching of Christianity, however, is "Be not afraid of them that kill the body".

In His thought, what we call death does not in any sense affect the continuity of the individual's life. The New Testament contains a magnificent passage which describes the state of our deceased loved ones "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Revelation vii. 16–17).

That is one of the most comforting passages ever written. They shall hunger no more. What hunger? Hunger of the body? Mental or spiritual hunger? Whatever it is, they shall hunger no more, but will be satisfied. Nor shall they thirst any more. Perhaps thirst is a more poignant description than hunger, for it is a deeper anguish when experienced The point is that our loved ones have their deepest longings and yearnings completely satisfied.

The passage also indicates that their life shall be so full and beautiful that it can only be described by the loveliness of fountains of living waters. And "every tear shall be wiped away from their eyes".

After my mother's death, as I relived our life-together, I remembered one lovely Sunday afternoon when together we saw the famous fountains of Versailles Like myriads of diamonds in the sunlight, the fountains played to the delight of my mother.

She was a very great traveller and visited many countries. She was, in truth, a connoisseur of beauty One rainy night she fell into ecstasy as she contemplated a ferry-boat running between Manhattan and Hoboken. She commented in ecstatic tones on its romance and charm, on the mystery of the river, the night and the rain and the boat with its lights in the mist.

After she passed away, it gave me comfort to think of her as being taken by God's hands and hearing him say "Come unto me, I will show you more marvellous fountains than those you once saw at Versailles" I am sure that she eagerly followed. I can almost see the dancing fountains reflected in her eyes. It is not difficult to think of God as wiping tears from her eyes. As she loved to travel and used to write enthusiastically that she was having a glorious time and only wished we [illegible] with her, so I believe that

though she is out of sight at present, she is having a time of great happiness It would not be fair to her to want her back from that land of ineffable charm. I can imagine her making mental notes of places of beauty and she probably says to herself "When my husband and children come here, won't it be a delight to show them these beautiful places which I have found and enjoyed?"

A veteran nurse says· "It has always seemed to me a major tragedy that so many people go through life haunted by the fear of death—only to find when it comes that it's as natural as life itself For very few are afraid to die when they get to the very end. In all my experience only one seemed to feel any terror—a woman who had done her sister a wrong which it was too late to right.

"Something strange and beautiful happens to men and women when they come to the end of the road. All fear, all horror disappears I have often watched a look of happy wonder dawn in their eyes when they realised this was true. It is all part of the goodness of nature and, I believe, of the illimitable goodness of God."

Do not hold on to your loved ones in your thoughts Release them, let them go. You do not lose them by so doing You hamper them with your dark and dismal thoughts of grief. They have earned the joy and delight which they are now experiencing Do not spoil it for them

I visited a little old-fashioned country burying-ground one winter day with a friend. This man had met with outstanding success, but he told me that when his mother died he felt that life was not worth living. He did not marry until late in life and had spent his earlier years in great devotion to his mother His happiest experiences did not consist in the attainment of some sought-after ambition, but were the pleasure of going home and telling his mother about them. When she died and this was no longer possible, he said that life seemed to lose its meaning There was nothing to work for any more He was somewhat bitter and found himself constantly seeking his mother out in his thoughts and resisting the idea that she had passed from him

As we stood in this little burying-ground, he said. "That is the way I felt until one day I came to this place." He had shown me a little cross-road store that had been operated by his father, and after the father's death, by his mother "She was a frail little woman," he said, "but her sparkling black eyes never showed any defeat. She had

little education and few opportunities. She had to work hard to bring up her little family As a small boy, I saw her drag heavy bags of sugar across the floor of the store. She would pull and I would get behind and push.

"Then came the night before I went away to college. She took me into her room and, reaching under the mattress, pulled out four crumpled ten-dollar notes. 'I have saved them for you,' she said. 'Take them, go to college, work hard and become a fine, outstanding man'"

He said "I shall never forget those crumpled notes resting in her little hands. I noted how worn her hands were and it touched my heart.

"So, when she died, I did not want to live. But one day I stood in this cemetery and looked at the old familiar hills capped with snow. It was all very peaceful and the stark beauty of the world in the cold winter sunshine gave me a sense of eternity I prayed, using the same words that she used to use. All at once I had a peculiar feeling of peace and inner quietness A thought came that had never previously occurred to me. It was that I was not being fair to my mother She had worked hard and now for the first time she was free of labour and toil.

"All her life long, she had read about heaven. I could still hear her voice singing 'There is a land of pure delight' She was one of those simple Christians for whom earth was a preparation for heaven, and I was not allowing her to enjoy this heaven for which she had laboured and toiled, and of which she had dreamed. So, standing in that little cemetery, I spoke out loud 'Mother, I am going to let you go, have a good time, you have earned this joy.' As soon as I said that, I had peace in my heart It was as if she actually came and stood beside me and said 'Thank you, my son, you understand. I will wait for you and meet you across the river Meanwhile, my spirit will often be near you'"

There is a natural wistfulness regarding the state and condition of our loved ones when they have passed from this life. We have no exact information, but there is sufficient reason to believe that our loved ones who died in the faith are in the kindly hands of God

It must be a beautiful place to which they have gone We know *nothing* about it, of course, but we do have intimations When that great wizard of the natural sciences, Thomas A. Edison, came to die, it was noticed that he was attempting to give a message. His physician, bending low, heard Mr

Edison say faintly but distinctly: "It is very beautiful over there."

A minister told of being with a dying man The family gathered in his room felt it must be dark going through the valley all alone, so they lighted all the lights that the dying man would not be afraid of going into the dark. Of a sudden, at midnight, he raised his head on the pillow and with a look of surprise said "Put out the lights. Can't you see, the sun is up."

I knew the meteorologist in a certain city He had held his position for forty years For four decades he had charted the weather and had studied natural laws He was by instinct, training and experience, a rational and a scientific mind. He was also a man of deep religious faith. His son was not a religious person in a formal sense. When the father came to die, he suddenly turned to his son, who sat by his bedside, and said. "Bill, I see the most beautiful place It is beyond description and . in a window is a light for me" An expression of great peace and happiness came over his face and he said no more.

When the son related this incident, I asked him· "What do you think your father actually saw?" His reply was characteristic of the scientific attitude of both father and son. "What do I think my father actually saw? Why, there is no doubt about that. He never reported anything he did not see or test or know He saw what he said he saw"

"Could it have been an hallucination?" I asked

"Not at all," he replied "My father had not the type of mind to have an hallucination. He saw something and reported it precisely as was his custom with all data," said the son "I am absolutely sure of it"

We must seek our information about the after-life from the only source that is thoroughly reliable, one that has stood the test of time. To the question· "What is the state of our loved ones after this life?", the Bible suggests the answer "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord" That means "Happy are the dead who die in the Lord"

It is difficult to associate happiness with death. Death for us is the ultimate tragedy But can anything in God's plan be a tragedy? Tennyson said· "Death is the bright side of life." Robert Louis Stevenson, when death came to him, said "If this is death, it is easier than life" One wonders in the light of such statements and certain experiences whether death is the tragedy we think it is We can-

not believe that God, in transferring a man from one form of life to another, would make of it a tragedy.

A news reporter had to undergo a serious operation. As it was performed under local anæsthesia, he had all his faculties about him, and was able to note and record his experiences. He decided he would go into this experience as a reporter, describing each step. If he came back from the edge of death, he would have a great story to tell. He found himself sinking. He came to a point where he did not want to come back. The pull was to go on. It was such an entrancing aspect of peace and beauty that every element in his nature urged him forward. It was reported afterwards by the doctor that he had a sinking spell. Then, by an act of will, he said: "I must return, I must fight off this allurement." With great reluctance he returned to normal life again, but said he would never again have a fear of death.

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The process of birth holds some suggestions of the protection we may experience at the end of earthly life. An infant, snuggled up under the mother's heart in the pre-natal days, is surrounded by warmth and protection. If he could reason, the baby might say "I don't want to be born; I don't want to go out of this world into that other world. I am happy here, I am afraid of birth."

In his pre-natal existence, he might regard birth as we do death, as the end of one certain experience and the beginning of another uncertain one. Then he is born. Looking down at him is the kindest and sweetest face in the world. He is cuddled in his mother's loving arms. There he is held and protected, fed and loved. God made it that way.

So after many years, when a man comes to die, need he be terrified at the prospect of death—or, if you please, of another birth? Should he fear to pass from this world into the next? If he had love and protection when first he came to this earth, may he not assume he will have the same as he enters the next life? Can we not trust the same God to take care for us in death as He did in birth? Will His attribute of love so quickly change? It would not be like Him.

We should learn to think of death as a natural part of our total experience. Let me relate the story of a woman who deeply understood this truth. She was past middle

age when she came to see me. "I have a hard problem for you," she said. "Three of the best physicians in New York have told me that I must undergo a serious operation not later than Monday morning, and that this operation may mean my death. The doctors told me frankly, because I asked them for the truth."

She had the quality of personality that could take the truth, no matter how grim "About a year ago," she continued, "I lost my son in the war" She showed me his picture, then said: "I ask you, sir, if I die as a result of this operation on Monday, will I see him again?"

She looked me squarely in the eye, searching intently for any indefiniteness or evasiveness. I looked directly into her eyes and told her. "It is my positive belief, based upon what I know of Jesus Christ, that you will see him again"

"How soon will that be after I go?" she asked.

"I wish I could say," I replied, "but if your son were in a foreign country and you went to see him, you would make for him as soon as the ship landed, wouldn't you? You will find him It can't be long, for love can never lose its own."

She said "I have a husband and a daughter. If I live, I will be with them. If I die, I shall see my son"

I said "Yes, you are in a very fortunate position. Regardless of what happens, you still have all your family."

"God is very good," she said slowly.

When she stood up to leave, I took her by the hand and could not help saying: "You are one of the greatest personalities I ever met."

Quietly, rationally, simply, she was getting ready for a journey. When she left me, she went to a photographer and had her picture taken. Later I saw those photographs and there was a light on her face Next, she saw her lawyer and even made arrangements for her funeral Then, quietly and in complete peace, she went to the hospital, where she submitted to the operation. Despite the best skill of modern science, she passed on. To-day, I believe, she is with both her son and her loved ones.

I cannot prove this. Long ago, I got over the idea that you have to prove everything. The man who disagrees cannot disprove it Although perhaps as yet the superiority of faith cannot be proven scientifically, yet we may reasonably consider our faith as a logic which goes beyond so-called scientific knowledge It is the deep logic of human

intuition which, in the final analysis, is an ultimate source of truth. What we feel inwardly in the logic of experience, in the flash of intuition, is true, especially when millions of human beings in every generation so think and so "feel".

We live in a generation during which death has visited households as never before. Only recently death's sinister touch was on battlefields all over the globe. Death lurked beneath the sea and hid behind every white cloud. His message daily came through the mail into thousands of homes His solemn voice came over the telegraph wires, in the form of a little yellow envelope containing a message which said. "The Government regrets to inform you that your son . . ." Then there was the shutting of a door, a stifled sob, and many a family repeated an experience known throughout the history of our generation. Death ruled the world Even in days of peace, death is always present

But remember this—death never wins. Write across the skies, blazon abroad that every man may hear the great and abiding faith which rises above the roar of battle, above the smoke and tumult of pain and suffering, above death itself as expressed in the lilting victorious words which have survived the centuries "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live"

That is the fact we need to know life wins an everlasting and glorious victory over death.

During the late war, the chaplains went with the troops to the very front. This accounts for the high casualty rate among chaplains. Catholic, Protestant, Jewish chaplains, they were in danger with the boys.

When a boy lay wounded or dying on the field, perhaps the first man to bend over him was the chaplain. The Christian chaplain wore on his helmet a little white cross—the Cross of Christ. The first thing that the eyes of the wounded man would see was the white cross on the helmet just above him. One thinks of a boy struck down, feeling death approach. Perhaps a terror wells up within that he wouldn't admit to anybody. A wave of home-sickness and loneliness comes over him. He would give anything to see the face of his mother, or his wife, or the face of his sweetheart, or feel the touch of the hands of his little children. He would like once again to see the sunlight falling on the old hills of his native land, but that is all very, very far away,

Norman Vincent Peale, Minister of the Marble Collegiate Church of New York, noted writer and radio speaker. Dr. Peale's letter is published here in the hope that it will also be of help to others.

Dear Mrs. Douglas:

If we could always keep out loved ones alive through the exercising of faith, there would never be any death. There has to come a time when, after God has spared them time and time again, He cannot spare them longer. It is given to all men to die. Some die in youth. Others die in old age. Some die in time of peace as a result of accident or disease, others die in time of war. I think one must assume that whenever a man dies, his life's work has been accomplished on this earth. In the thought of God, years as we measure them are as flashing seconds to Him. It makes no difference whether a man lives twenty years or eighty years, when he has finished his work here he is promoted to that higher realm of the spirit which we call heaven

Really, it is a high honour that some men can finish their life's work at an early age, while others in the sight of God apparently do not do so well, and they have to stay here longer until they finally work it out.

It is a fact that we poor human beings think so deeply in earthly terms. God does not place the same valuation upon earthly existence that we do. He said: "Be not afraid of them who kill the body, but rather those who may destroy the soul"

Of course, this is little comfort to one who looks and longs for a beloved face and figure. But if we are thinking spiritually rather than in an earthly way, we do not lay so much importance upon the life of the body.

You have been a woman of faith. You say your son had faith This meant that you were both in the will of God You were harmonised with His will and purpose. I would think, then, that you ought to assume, which I am sure you may, that your son being yielded to God, His will was done

God in His answers to prayer often says "Yes". Sometimes He says "Wait". Often he says "No". In any case, His will is done, and true faith is to believe that what has happened has happened for the best. If one does not take that attitude, he is setting his personal desire against

the wisdom of God. Often-times we confuse with faith merely that which we desire

I should like to ask you, in the deepest possible kindness, do you really think you have lost your son? Let me tell you a little story.

Recently I sat in the home of two good friends whose son had died in France Two photographs were on their library wall One was of the father in the uniform of World War I; the other was of the 20-year-old son in the uniform of this war

In the intimacy of friendship they talked tenderly of their son. "He always whistled," the mother said. "Far down the street, when he came home from school as a little boy, you could hear him whistling, and as he grew up he whistled. He would come dashing into the house whistling, and toss his coat and hat at the hall hat-stand; and both would catch the peg and hang there Then he would run up the stairs whistling. He was a gay spirit"

They told humorous incidents, and, in that intimate way of friendship, we were laughing—and occasionally the laughter would be through tears Suddenly, the mother said sadly "But we will never hear him whistle again"

Strange as it seems, at that moment I had an indistinct, but nevertheless real, feeling that I had "heard" the boy whistle as we talked. It might have been the mood we were in, yet I prefer to believe differently, but as she said "We will never hear him whistle again", I found myself saying "You are wrong about that"—I hesitated—"I had a feeling that right this minute he was whistling in this room."

The father—a sturdy, unemotional person—spoke up quickly· "Strange that you should say that, I had the same feeling myself" We sat hushed and awed. Ingersoll's great line passed through my mind—"In the night of death, hope sees a star, and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing."

In the faith that God will give you peace and understanding, I am—Cordially yours—Norman Vincent Peale

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS AND YOU CHANGE EVERYTHING

CHANGE your thoughts and everything changes. Your life is determined by the kind of thoughts you habitually think

If, however, your thoughts do *not* change, you will follow your old life pattern as the following story shows . .

A hotel manager told me that a Barbers' Supply Association held a convention in his hotel This organisation had a very enterprising publicity agent. He went down to a poor street in a bad section and found the most unpromising specimen of human nature he could locate—an unkempt, unshaven, drunken, sad creature This down-and-outer was taken to the hotel, where they gave him a haircut, dressed him in a good suit of clothes, gave him nice linen. They decked him out in a rakish-looking overcoat and cane and spats. When he emerged from this refurbishing, he was a marvellous example of the barber's art. Meanwhile, they had photographed every process of this transformation, and each photograph appeared in the daily newspaper. It was hailed as a first-rate publicity stunt Everybody was amazed at what the barbers could do, with the help of the tailors, in making over a man. The hotel manager was impressed. After the convention his interest in the man remained.

He said to him "By a strange set of circumstances you have been made into the form of a gentleman, and lifted out of the slums Now your great opportunity is at hand. I am going to give you a job in another hotel which I operate, and I am going to back you, and we are going to make a successful man of you. When will you go to work?"

The man replied "Suppose we make it to-morrow morning at eight o'clock "

A doubt crossed the mind of the hotel manager, but he agreed The doubt came back at eight o'clock next morning when his man did not show up. Nor did he appear all day So the manager, following a hunch, went down to the same street from which the man had come, and after a search found him dead drunk, sleeping on some newspapers in an alley, his fine clothes rumpled and soiled

The hotel manager said that it was a most disillusioning

experience. "The barbers may be able to clean him up on the outside, but you can never make anything out of a man until you also change him on the inside," and he added ruefully: "I wish I could have had him just a little longer, for the thing that was wrong with that man was his thought processes. Maybe if I could have had him a little longer, I could have changed his thinking and so have changed him."

To make amends for this depressing story, the hotel manager told me another.

"I have somebody to counteract the man who reverted to his old thoughts," he said. "It is Jimmy, the elevator-boy and bell-hop. He was sent to me by a church school for delinquent boys. He was a bright lad, greeted everybody politely, was always courteous. He worked hard and had good moral habits. One day the boy came to me and said: 'I am going to get married. Will you be the best man?'" So this big hotel manager was best man for a bell-hop, which was just like him.

He became interested in the boy, and one day said to him: "Jimmy, you are an unusual fellow. What makes you this way? You have something that is missing in a good many boys. What is that something?"

Jimmy answered: "Oh, I don't know, unless it is what they did for us down at the school."

"Well," he asked, "what did they do for you at the school?"

The boy replied thoughtfully: "Oh, I don't know, unless it is that they got us to thinking—kinda religious—I guess that's it. They got us to thinking kinda religious."

Of course Jimmy has gone ahead. He discovered that life is what your thoughts make it. He learned to think "kinda religious".

A man's world is not primarily made of the circumstances that surround him. The kind of thoughts he thinks determines the exact kind of world in which he lives. You are not what you think you are, but what you *think*, you are.

The wisest men of all time have said this. Nineteen hundred years ago there lived a Roman Emperor by the name of Marcus Aurelius. He has been called the wisest man of the Roman Empire. On his long marches and military campaigns, he sat by his camp-fire writing his thoughts. These thoughts were gathered together in a book called *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, one of the greatest heritages from antiquity. And one of the greatest things that

this wise man said is this. "Your life is what your thoughts make of it."

The wisest man who ever lived in the United States of America, some people say, was Ralph Waldo Emerson. And he said. "A man is what he thinks about all day long."

And the wisest of all books declares· "As a man thinketh in his heart (i e., as a man thinketh in his subconscious mind), so is he"

What you think, what you have been thinking over a long period of time, what you are going to think in the days ahead will determine precisely what you are and the kind of world you live in What you think determines what you become.

Change your thoughts and you will change your world. Change your thoughts correctly and everything will change into inner peace, happiness and personal power.

"Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans xii. 2). No wiser thing was ever said. You can transform yourself, the world in which you live, your home conditions, your business conditions, in fact your whole life, by a spiritual renewing of your thoughts.

This book advocates a formula of living that assigns large importance to the power of our thoughts in changing the conditions of our lives. The secret, as Jimmy, the bell-hop, said, is to think "kinda religious". Normal spiritual thinking can so change a person's life as to make everything different.

Thought patterns which have been traced over a long period of time are difficult to modify. Wrong thinking becomes habit and habitual procedures resist change. Fortunately in Christianity we have a phenomenon called "spiritual experience". It is a process by which God's power accomplishes in our minds, sometimes instantly, what laborious, tedious, correction would require months to achieve. This is not to say that all spiritual experience is instantaneous. Often, indeed more often, it is a process of growth and progressive development. In whatever way spiritual experience occurs, it is a method superior to psychological discipline and is more effective and certain of permanence. This comparison is not to be interpreted as minimising the value of psychological discipline, a value I readily grant

Condition your mind to spiritual change by practising spiritual thinking Read the Bible regularly. Commit its

passages to memory, thus constantly feeding your mind material which will remake its attitudes. Know spiritually minded people and experience the gradual mental change which results from spiritual conversation. Subject your mind to the atmosphere in which spiritual experience occurs; go to church regularly. Get your mind into the habit of prayer. Think about God and Christ at every opportunity. Persevere until you find yourself enjoying this plan of disciplining your thinking In this process you are changing your thought pattern, making it possible for spiritual experience to change everything for you.

The great change may come when least expected. I was in a certain city one day and between engagements went into a large bookshop The head sales-woman was a very pleasant little elderly lady. We got into conversation and she told me she had been in that store for a great many years.

"I would like to ask you a question," I said. "What type of books has the greatest sale to-day?"

"Oh," she said, "the answer to that is easy. It is books dealing with self-improvement and books dealing with religion." Then she volunteered the opinion that the highest form of self-improvement literature are religious writings

Naturally, I was interested to know that the general public was buying this type of literature, and then she commented: "The most unlikely type of people seem to be buying religious reading. They aren't what you would call saintly people, but they are young folk, everyday people, all kinds, business people and for the most part men Would you like to hear of an interesting incident that happened here recently?" she asked.

Assured of my interest, she said "One day not long ago a tall, lanky soldier came into the shop He was over six feet and as thin as a rail. Yet he was whistling exuberantly, with total unconcern for the presence of others, just whistling out of a heart that was obviously overflowing with joy. 'My, my,' I exclaimed, 'somebody is certainly happy ' He gave a broad grin and replied 'I sure am, ma'am, I sure am happy. I have just come back from overseas I was in a German prison for a long time and I lost forty pounds.'

" 'I don't see anything in that to make you so happy.' I said.

" 'Oh,' he said, 'you don't understand, so I will tell you.'

" 'In that prison we had very little to read Anything in

print that came our way was devoured by the boys One day there came into my hands an old, worn, dog-eared copy of a religious novel that was widely read a few years back.'

"He said 'Back at home I never would have looked at this book I never went to church or anything, for I always had the idea that churches were dull, stuffy places, and they never would get me inside of one, except maybe at Easter'

"This book was the story of how everybody who came under the influence of Jesus Christ had wonderful things happen to them.

"'Well,' he said, 'ma'am, I read that book and all of a sudden something wonderful happened to *me* I believe Jesus Christ is alive now just the same as He was in the Bible story times, for as I read this book, I am sure He touched me Suddenly, quicker than I can tell you about it, I felt happy inside of my heart and everything changed. The whole world became different. Why,' he said, 'I was set free before the American Army came I was set free from myself, which was the greatest prison I was ever in.

"'So,' he continued, 'I finally got back home and was re-united with my wife, and she is a wonderful girl, the prettiest and sweetest there ever was, but'—he hesitated—'she is lacking something. She is heavy-hearted and dull In her mind, she is pessimistic and negative. Life for her is just a hard dragging kind of thing. She is not happy. So, ma'am, I have come down to this store to get a copy of that book and I am going to read it to her in the hope that she will get what I got I want the same thing to happen to her that happened to me'"

What *had* happened to him? That a tremendous change had taken place in him is obvious At the precise moment when his emotional and mental attitudes were favourable, a book able vitally to affect his thoughts came into his hands So a spiritual experience took place and everything changed

Other people arrive at a similar condition more gradually. They definitely set out to practise new habits and attitudes. They systematically seek help from religion and presently they, too, become aware of change in outlook, in personal relations, and in the strength and power which is theirs. It is manifested in their daily lives Happiness comes and also a grip and mastery over circumstances.

They say of a man who knows where he is going and

how to get there that he is 'on the beam". This means he has reduced the element of error and is closely approximating the centre of truth or efficiency.

Another common statement is. "He has something on the ball," meaning he has the skill. He has the slight extra turn. He knows how to do it.

Another such statement is "He is in the groove," meaning he is going right straight down the centre to the mark. He has mastered the matter. All of this may seem quite remote from religion, but it isn't. The Bible is very wise. It says, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you." What does that mean? Simply, seek skill in God's way of doing things. Seek God's *rightness* (the word righteousness indicates "rightness", skill, genius, the slight hair's turn that makes everything different) Seek the rightness which God teaches and you will have the skilful touch. Therefore, where you have failed heretofore, you will now acquire skill.

The pity is that a lot of people go through life blundering, failing, struggling along, never quite obtaining or achieving, when all can be different if they will learn and practise the simple principles of Christianity. Then things instead of being subtracted from them will be added unto them. Instead of life slipping from their grasp, life will flow towards them. Nothing can break them down, nothing can overwhelm them, nothing can destroy the peace, happiness and usefulness of their lives.

. . . .

Another factor in the process by which changing your thoughts changes everything is the practice of the psychology of joy If one expects to live a happy life, he must first practise thinking happy thoughts If, as has been stated by wise men, our life is what our thoughts make of it, then it follows naturally that a joyful existence is predicated upon joyful thinking

It is not likely that aimless thinking or the occasional and vagrant joyful thought will produce this effect. One must deliberately set about thinking happy thoughts as the normal slant of his mind. Discipline yourself daily to the practice of thinking thoughts of joy instead of succumbing to gloomy and depressed thoughts.

People manufacture their own
of thoughts they think They

which conceivably makes for happiness but miss a pleasant and useful existence because their thoughts have fallen into habitual gloominess or negativism. People easily develop the habit of thinking negatively. They form a thought pattern of depression and failure. As a result they feel mentally, emotionally and physically depressed.

Instead of practising the psychology of joy, people who fail practise the psychology of pessimism. Their minds become filled with shadows and as a result life generally is full of shadows. Remember this important truth about your life—there is a definite tendency in human nature to become what you habitually think and practise. Set yourself, therefore, deliberately to be a joyful personality in your thinking. Obviously this will require practise. It will be very difficult at first as it always is when you try to overcome old mental habits. Everything in the mind resists the abandonment of a mental habit But if you persevere and take your mind by the scruff of the neck, if one may use such a figure, tyrannising over it, determining to control it, you will finally accomplish your purpose and your mind will yield to your new determination.

When Jesus Christ said. "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full," He was stating a truth so potent, so electric, so profound that the man who ignores it misses the greatest aid to success and happiness. This truth can absolutely free a human personality. Psychologically we know that joy is a freeing and releasing agent in the mind. Joy can even make you feel better physically. It can help unlock your muscles It can release energy. In short, it has the power to make you efficient, to get your whole personality, body, mind and spirit co-ordinated. Joy helps you to function efficiently. If the psychological effect of joy were better understood, it would be deliberately and enthusiastically practised by every intelligent person.

William H ("Little Bill") Miller, a famous athletic coach, says that one of the best ways to become an athlete is to develop the psychology of joy He was teaching a man to play golf According to Coach Miller, the most important factor in golf is relaxation, the complete ease and freedom of muscular co-ordination, the absence of tension And one way to get that, he insists, is to develop an inner spirit of joy.

Miller was once having trouble in teaching a man be-

cause the pupil was very tense and tied-up. To counteract tension, the coach said. "Joe, before you make your next shot, imagine that somebody has just told you the most uproarious joke you ever heard. Laugh heartily, then before you finish the laugh, turn around, give no thought to the technique, just swing your club, strike the ball. Have no concern about where it goes, just laugh and hit it." The man did so and the ball sailed straight as an arrow down the fairway. The coach explained "The joy welling up within him set Joe's mind free." When the tension dropped out of Joe's mind, it dropped out of his muscles. His whole being became co-ordinated through the therapeutic of joy He became a unified personality and the stroke was natural, with the result that it was good.

On another occasion Miller was teaching a girl to play tennis. Her techniques were correct, but still she was not a successful player. The coach said. "Let's sing as we play."

Rather self-consciously she started to sing. But when she got into the rhythm of the song, strangely enough she discovered it was the rhythm of the game. She forgot herself, lost herself. Her strokes fell into natural form and she struck the ball properly as she sang She became released, and being filled with joy played excellently.

Learn the skill of living Practise your religion. Think joy, not gloom.

One marvels at the astute wisdom of Jesus. To-day the great scientific thinkers of our time are only beginning to learn principles which He taught two thousand years ago Think of it, twenty centuries ago He told us that the psychology of joy releases people. Now in this modern age psychiatrists, athletic coaches, students of the human mind, are just beginning to recognise the truth of these teachings. He was the first to instruct us that when a person feeds his thoughts with spiritual joy, it sets free creative abilities and makes for happiness and success.

This thing called spiritual experience plus the practising of the simple techniques of the Christian faith produces the thought changes which make for happiness and successful living.

Let me call as witnesses several different types of people who have experienced the change of thought and life outlined above.

At a dinner-party I sat beside a famous actress Two other ministers sat at our end of the table. One of these

ministers was an elderly man and had been one of the most eminent clergymen in the United States. The other minister is known round the world, a great and eloquent orator The older minister is the best story-teller I have ever heard, bar none. Had he gone on the stage, he would certainly have been a famous comedian.

The second man was also a capital story-teller. I chimed in with my own poor little stories. One story after another by three ministers—a sort of ministerial "Can You Top This?"—kept the party in an uproar Had there been a "laugh meter", it would have registered high scores.

Finally the famous actress shook her head in wonderment and said· "I never heard anything like it. I have been in all kinds of parties, and in the most sophisticated night spots, but I never met three such gay lads as you ministers."

She looked sharply at us and asked "You haven't had anything, have you? Personally, I can't get that happy until I have had several "

I started to say "Of course not," when the elderly minister intercepted me and replied "Yes, we have had something. Yes, madam, we are intoxicated "

His face was so radiant and his eyes so alight that she understood and said softly "I know what you mean." She understood that Christ so completely releases people from dwarfing, crippling thoughts and emotions that life never grows stale.

Some years ago I spoke to several hundred young people at a convention They were a gay and happy crowd, a rakish-looking lot, too Judging by their outlandish attire, I thought "This is certainly a sophisticated crowd " I found that I was right, they were sophisticated. Sophistication means worldly wise Supposedly, a sophisticated person is one who knows what it is all about, and how to get happiness out of life. He knows his way around On the other hand, certain bored, cynical pagans you see yawning around are not truly sophisticated They are not worldly wise, because they have missed happiness. A truly sophisticated person is one who is smart enough to find out how really to be happy Therefore, although some may be surprised to hear it, a sophisticated person is a spiritual person

I never encountered such an eager audience as this group of young sophisticates. They anticipated ideas before they were half uttered and at anything humorous, before you made your point, they were ahead of you and roaring with

laughter They were alert, vibrant, a crowd of the most released people I have met.

One of these boys later said in his slangy jargon "I used to run with a pretty fast crowd, but I never began to enjoy life until I got in with this gang," indicating the crowd by a wave of his hand. Then he shook his head and said "That bunch I used to go with was a bunch of saps—honestly! I only wish I could make them understand how really to get a kick out of life."

"How *do* you get a kick out of life?" I asked

He looked at me and, absolutely without embarrassment, replied "Why, get Christ into your heart, that's the way to get a kick out of life."

Usually, when people start talking about religion they get a funny look on their faces and act in an embarrassed way, but this boy shot his statement right out as normally and naturally as you please

Something of this nature happened in my church recently This church is located in the heart of New York City on Fifth Avenue and the young people come from everywhere in the United States A young broker from Kansas City came to New York "to do the town", as he said. He stayed at a hotel near the church He started uptown, headed for the night clubs, but as he passed the church he saw a sign. Something about it stopped him. It announced a young people's affair that was going on that evening Back in Kansas City, he was a churchman of sorts, and he thought "I shall just go in here and see what a young people's meeting in a New York City church looks like, and maybe I can give them a few pointers back in Kansas City"

He intended to stay only for a few minutes, but found such a spirit of radiant happiness that it captivated him and he stayed all evening He had a mid-Western breezy style and ability to get acquainted As a matter of fact, even an iceberg would have acquired a genial glow of warmth from that crowd He played around with them all the week-end, and then went back to Kansas City.

When he left he said "What do you know? I came to New York on business and to do the town, and I got a greater thrill in this church than I ever could have found on Broadway or in the night clubs. I never did get up to the bright-light district I found all the bright lights I needed right down there in the church"

By changing your thoughts you can also change situations, and changing some situations is a requisite to success and happiness You can develop an almost incredible power that will help you in crises where otherwise you would surely fail We put too much dependence upon methods other than those of a spiritual nature to give us force and strength We have not yet learned to believe in the astounding power of spiritual force. The sun quietly and without a sound can accomplish what all the bedlam of the machinery of the world cannot do. Quiet spiritual thinking establishes contact with spiritual energy and thus endows the man who practises it with superhuman strength.

On an early morning train running from Cedar Rapids to Chicago, I happened to meet the famous negro singer, Roland Hayes He occupied the seat opposite me We had what was for me, at least, one of the most stimulating conversational experiences in my life The talk turned to religion, the consuming interest of Mr. Hayes. Without question, he is not only one of the truly great singers of our time, but one of our noblest spiritual geniuses as well. He has sung before presidents and kings, and before acclaiming audiences in many lands, but he remains a simple, unaffected disciple of the King of Kings.

He told me that it is his custom as he begins a programme to stand quietly for a minute by the piano as the vast audience waits. He closes his eyes and prays saying. "Lord, as I sing, please blot Roland Hayes out. Let the people see only Thee"

"I believe," he explained, "that when I do that sincerely, I become a channel through which God's spirit flows to move and lift the hearers." Critics have long been impressed by the deeply spiritual quality of Mr. Hayes's artistry. Undoubtedly, it is accounted for in part at least by his devout attitude. Singing, to him, is primarily a method by which people may be lifted spiritually.

Roland Hayes told me a story that morning on that rushing train that will live with me for ever as an illustration of the power of the spirit over any force in this world.

In a certain town late at night, he was set upon by four policemen who manhandled him without the slightest justification. Their attitude was brutal, bordering on the sadistic and they gave full expression to their hatred not for him alone but for his race Here was one lone and defenceless negro at the mercy of four white men unrepresentative of, and a disgrace to, the white race.

"Didn't you get angry and fight them back?" I asked.

"How could I?" he replied. "I was no match physically for even one of them. But I *was* a match for them in another way and so was able to overcome them. I brought to bear a power that no evil can stand against."

"What did you do?" I asked with intense interest.

"I retired into God-consciousness," he replied. "I just prayed for the spirit of Christ to flow through me into the hearts of these misguided men. As I thus exercised spiritual thought-power, suddenly I had a feeling of being lifted up high above this hatred and I looked down upon them in compassion and pity. One policeman raised his pistol with the intent of hitting me with its butt. While his arm was raised a curious and bewildered expression overcame his face. Slowly his poised arm dropped. He had been stopped by the tremendous power of the spirit, by God-consciousness."

Later Mr. Hayes was invited back to that town by the Christian-in-spirit members of that community. He returned as guest of honour at a great tribute meeting. Messages came from the President of the United States and other distinguished citizens

As the train on which we rode roared through a snowstorm, I sat awe-struck before the spiritual power of this man, for his story was told with a complete absence of self. At times, his voice was so low I could scarcely catch his words. I, who try to preach Christianity, sat as a very imperfect student in the presence of a master of the spiritual life.

Roland Hayes had discovered and demonstrated a spiritual method that proved extremely practical. By long practice he had become a master at it and therefore was able to summon the energies of his mind in a crisis. Not being practised, perhaps we would fumble this skill at first. But if you will discipline and train your mind, seeking constantly to bring it into harmony with the mind of Christ, you, too, in your hours of difficulty will be able to summon a power against which nothing can stand

Happiness and success therefore depend strangely upon our ability to free our minds to work for us Anything that inhibits the flow of spiritual energy through the mind tends to defeat us. Men allow their minds to become shackled in many ways—by self-pity, by anxiety, by self-interest, by lust, by greed. Charles Dickens spoke wisely when he said

"We bear the chains we forge in life." We prevent ourselves from attaining our heart's desire by the cruel manner in which we hamper our own minds.

In this book we have tried to outline many of the ways in which the mind can become untangled. Psychiatric science is of great assistance In our Psycho-Religio Clinic at the Marble Collegiate Church, the distinguished psychiatrist, Dr. Smiley Blanton, and I have worked painstakingly on the problem of eliminating the tangles from people's minds. Sometimes it is a long, slow, tedious process. It is often effective, I am thankful to report. There is great effectiveness in the joint operation of Christianity and psychiatry However, we have learned to rely upon another factor that cures the mind as a surgical operation oftentimes cures organic trouble that has not yielded to long treatment Perhaps I can best explain this process by applying to it an old and often misunderstood term This term, however, is the best possible explanation. The term is "conversion", and I take that to mean the inflow into the mind of spiritual power with such potency and therapeutic effectiveness that the mind is completely changed. There is a phrase in the New Testament which is very graphic and which portrays what takes place in this process. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians v 17).

That is to say, change your thoughts (spiritually) and everything changes A newspaper editor told of experiencing this process in his struggle with fear This man, born in Canada of French-Canadian parents, came into the world with a withered leg. From earliest infancy he had to wear a brace on his leg As he grew, he found that he could not compete with the other boys If he couldn't run or play or climb trees as a little lad, how could he climb the ladder of life later on, he reasoned.

Thus the poisonous fear began to come into his thought and finally fear created a brace on his mind, even as he had a brace on his leg.

But the father said. "Son, don't worry about that leg of yours Some day I am going to take you into the cathedral and there before the great altar, God will heal you"

The great day came Both father and son, dressed in their best clothes, went reverently into the church. They came down the aisle of the cathedral hand in hand, the boy

looking about wonderingly, his little withered leg thumping along

They knelt at the altar The father said: "Son, pray and ask God to heal you" They both prayed. Finally the boy lifted his face. His father was still in prayer. Then the father lifted his face The boy said in later years "I have seen my father's face under many circumstances, but never before had I seen such unearthly beauty as was upon his countenance in that moment There was a light resting there. It was the reflected exultation of the true believer. There were tears in my father's eyes, but beyond the tears and shining through was the dazzling sunlight of faith. It was a wonderful sight, my father's face," the boy said

Then the father put his hand on the boy's shoulder and said with deep feeling 'Son, let us give thanks to God. You are healed"

The boy was profoundly impressed He stood up and then he looked down and there was his leg, the same as before They started down the aisle, the little withered leg thumping along as usual The lad was deeply disappointed. They came almost to the great door of the cathedral, then the boy said: "I stopped dead still, for all of a sudden I felt something tremendously warm in my heart. Then I seemed to feel something like a great hand pass across my head and touch me. It was as light as eiderdown but I can feel it to this day, the delicacy and yet the strength of the touch. All of a sudden I was wondrously happy and I cried out 'Father, you are right, I have been healed I have been healed'"

Boy that he was, he was wise enough to know what had happened He said "God had not taken the brace off my leg, but He had taken the brace off my mind" God is great enough to heal a withered leg, if it is His will, but perhaps it is a greater thing to heal a wounded mind, a mind which carries the brace of fear. To strike off that brace, to set free the mind so that never again should it be bound and hampered by abnormal fear or any other enemy of success and happiness surely is one of the greatest things in this world. With the mind set free your thoughts change and so—everything changes

A GUIDE TO CONFIDENT LIVING

In this book (which has appeared repeatedly in the American best-seller list), Dr. Peale, who is Minister of the oldest Protestant church in America, offers a real solution to personal problems The old teachings of the Bible are put into modern psychiatric form and applied to troubles like inferiority complex, sense of guilt, defeatism and the kind of worry that saps a person's confidence. The book is packed with cases where religious counselling has helped troubled people to rid themselves of hyper-tension, marital conflicts and other enemies of buoyant living

"Change your thoughts," says Dr Peale, "and you change your world" He does not merely exhort you to substitute confident faith for negative self-destroying thoughts He shows you how to do this, particularly in the chapters on marital happiness and on how to meet sorrow

A Guide to Confident Living is written in "plain talk" style, packed with examples, practical in spirit, scientific and religious in outlook. Its aim is to help the reader to more energy, a bolder outlook and a rock-like confidence that he can master his problems Dr Peale's prescription for confidence is not a sedative, but a stimulant to a health-giving faith.

Dr Peale is also the author of *The Power of Positive Thinking*, which was recently serialized by the *Daily Express*.

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THE DAILY LIFE OF BUDDHA

by

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B. E. 2484

C. E. 1940

PREFACE

The 9th Anniversary of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, of the Maha Bodhi Society, Sarnath, was held from 10th November to 13th November, 1940. Lectures on Buddhism were held at the Benares Town Hall. The "Daily Life of Buddha" was one of the lectures

As this is a subject which has a popular appeal, it is now offered in booklet form

The Daily Life of Buddha.

I have been given the privilege of addressing you to-night As you know, the subject of this talk deals with the daily happenings of a world famous personality

Now I want you to come with me, to go backwards in time, to the India of 2,500 years ago The part of India which is of interest to us lies in the plain of the Ganges, also from the foot of the Himalayas in the Nepal country right down to South Bihar

An interesting and useful book, written by the late Professor Rhys Davids of the University College, London, has given us an excellent description of India of 2,500 years ago The book is known as "Buddhist India" From it we have a good idea of the social conditions which existed during the Sixth Century B C, and which the Buddha himself knew so well

We learn something of the four Kingdoms which flourished, how business was carried on in the market towns, we become acquainted with the 11 or 12 chief clans of the day, the Sakya clan being the one to which Buddha belonged

Village life, and the economic conditions which prevailed in the towns were simple The country was immense A huge forest swept down from the foot of the Himalayas, broad rivers wended their way through forest and jungle. Merchants would convey

their goods either up and down the great rivers, or along the coast line or right across country in carts travelling in caravans. There were no made roads or bridges as we know them to-day. These caravans struggled along slowly through the forest, along tracks from village to village, kept open by the peasants.

Turning to the intellectual world, as far as we are able to ascertain, the Fifth and Sixth Centuries B. C was an age in which India fostered, promoted and encouraged every system of Thought, and active research into the Highest and Best in Man. It was a time when the power of the spoken word was supreme, when a man or a woman of certain mental qualifications was referred to as a "well-heard man" — the memory method, what a person carried in his head, being the basis of his learning, a method brought to a perfection unparalleled in the history of the world.

Drawing closer to the daily life of the Master, we find the men and women who were devoting themselves to the religious and philosophical way of life, were divided into two groups—the Hermits and the Wanderers The Hermits confined themselves to the forest near a village settelment. They were disciples of various Schools of Thought, and according to the various teachings which they followed, they would either spend their time in Meditation, or in sacrificial rites, or in practices of self-torture or in repeating over to themselves, and in teaching to their pupils, the Suttas containing the tenets of their schools

Then we have the Wanderers, a school of men greatly respected throughout the country They were teachers who spent eight or nine months of every year wandering about the country, with the object of engaging in discussions on matters of "ethics and philosophy, nature lore and mysticism".

Rest houses which villagers built specially for travellers were used by them and we learn of buildings being built for them where they could lecture on their particular system of belief.

The Buddha himself was at one time a Hermit, practising all kinds of religious rites and self-torture which in the end he found quite useless and which he afterwards condemned. After he attained his Nirvana at Gaya, he became a Wanderer

Some of these Schools are known to us by name, either through the leadership of one teacher, or when a group of disciples were united in a set of opinions. Thus the members of the Buddhist Order were known in those days, as the Sakyaputtiya Samanas. The Buddha during his forty years of ministry on earth, *was generally referred to as "the recluse, Master* Gotama, the Sakya gone forth from the Sakya Clan" and in Tibet to-day the Buddha is known as Sakyamuni

In those far off days, a well known teacher of whatever School of Philosophy was subjected to the minutest scrutiny He came under the critical eye of rival teachers, visiting controversialists, the local Raja, and his own disciples

The first inquiry concerning a famous teacher was his family history and whether he could trace his descent "right back through seven successive generations without break or blemish in the lineage, both on the father's side and on the mother's side"

In one section of the Buddhist Scriptures, known as the Majjhima Nikaya, we read of a certain aged brahmin bidding a young disciple of his, to go through the country to where Gotama was residing and to find out whether the facts about the Reverend Gotama tallied with popular repute.

The young brahmin did his job thoroughly For seven months he followed the Buddha like a shadow, keeping a watchful eye on every movement He first of all satisfied himself over certain psychic or supernormal powers which Gotama was reputed to possess and here I should like to say, that in this address to you, I am keeping to the practical side of the Master's life, any other aspect of his daily life I will merely mention if necessary

Then this youug Brahmin got on with his job ; he watched the Buddha as to how he walked, how he controlled his eyes. "Three yards does his foreward glance extend, beyond that distance his boundless ken and vision comes into play"—how Gotama entered a house, how he sat down on a seat, how he behaved himself when seated indoors, how he received water to wash his bowl, how he received the curry food, how he ate his food, how he swallowed the food, how he washed his bowl after the meal, how he put his bowl to one side, how he would sit in silence a little after his meal, how he would return thanks for the meal to the people who had invited him, how he would then instruct the company present, how he would then rise up and depart , then the robe which the Master wore, was neither too long nor too short , it was neither skin tight nor baggy, nor did the wind blow it up, how he would wash his feet on return to his residence, how he would sit cross legged with his body erect in alert mindfulness, or meditation, how he preached the Doctrine to those gathered in his residence

All this, with many details which I have not mentioned here, the young brahmin recited to his aged teacher, and ended up with "that is what he is like, only more so".

Let us see how the Buddha affected various people during the daily life. In those days the

teacher's personal appearance was highly prized and full of meaning The Kshatriya or Warrior Caste to which the Buddha belonged, and the Brahmins, possessed a fair or light coloured skin

The Buddha, according to all accounts, was apparently gifted with a complexion of beauty and clearness. On one occasion when he was walking along the highway, he was stopped by a mendicant with the following remark, "Reverend Sir, your faculties are under control and your complexion is clear and bright To follow whom have you gone forth on pilgrimage ?"

On another occasion a great Jain controversialist whose aim was to discredit Buddha in argument and learning, actually was compelled, to praise him—'It is wonderful, it is marvellous, how while you were being spoken to so offensively and with such insinuations, you have not changed colour nor has your countenance altered".

But on two occasions we read the Buddha's countenance did go through a change, an alteration, a *transfiguration*—in fact, the whole body changed A shining light radiated from him, from his head to his foot We learn that on the two occasions when this *transfiguration* took place was on the night when Buddha realized supreme Enlightenment, Nirvana, and again when the Buddha was on the point of finally passing away

Returning to the daily life of the Master, we note that Brahmin teachers agreed that Gotama was in possession of a pleasant sounding voice, free of huskiness and with the ability of making his meaning quite clear in unfaltering, refined and courteous speech, qualities which continued right into his 80th year. In fact the Buddha possessed great skill in the use of words In the Majjhima Nikaya we read the opinion of a certain monk. "As I listened to his

discourse", declared the venerable Nagasamala, "the hairs of my body stood on end. Such magic was in his words that when clever and hair-splitting disputants came to him thinking to confound him, he" relates Vacchayana, "by a discourse on his Doctrine so informs and enlightens them, so cheers them forward and helps them onwards, that in the end they never put their questions at all, much less do they confute him, but actually become Gotama's disciples".

The Buddha's words were like a lamp in darkness. Whatsoever word is blameless, pleasant to the ear, lovely, reaching to the heart, urbane pleasing to the people, beloved of the people "these are the words of the Buddha", "Words full of meaning .. ..worthy, to be laid up in one's heart, fitly illustrated, clearly directed to the point".

He never spoke vague or idle words He refrained from low subjects ;—Tales of kings, robbers, of ministers of state, tales of war, terrors ; talk about foods and drinks, clothes, beds, garlands, perfumes ; tales about relationships, villages, towns, cities and countries, tales about women : gossip at street-corners ; ghost stories, rambling talk ; speculations about the creation of the land or sea, or about existence and non-existence, Instead of all this he would hold that "comprehensive religious talk" which [illegible] direct to the heart, acts upon the will, and produces results here and now.

When his instruction is over", says Uttara, a young brahmin, "his hearers rise up and depart reluctantly, with their gaze still on him" His presence and general deportment were described as stately, in [illegible] all accounts his whole appearance gave [illegible] satisfaction. But with regard to his [illegible] the Master always endeavoured to counteract any tendency [illegible] him just for his appearance [illegible] alone. One of the monks who had

been taken desperately ill while on his way to visit Buddha, sent his attendants to request the Master to come to him. The monk, Vakkali, by name had been taken to a potter's workshop and there Gotama visited him The monk Vakkali, was well known for his adoration of his Master and after Gotama had questioned him about his illness and had put certain questions as to his state of mind, Vakkali responded with—

"For a long time, Lord, I have been longing to set eyes on the Exalted One, but I had not strength enough in this body to come to see the Exalted One"—

The Buddha answered the sick monk, "Hush, Vakkali ! What is there in seeing this vile body of mine ? He who seeth the Norm, Vakkali he seeth me. He who seeth me, Vakkali, he seeth the Norm Verily, seeing the Norm, one sees me , seeing me, one sees the Norm"—etc.

We also note that Gotama's strong and sympathetic personality gave his visitors and questioners confidence in him. They felt he was trustworthy, and neither were they disappointed in his goodness and purity. So filled with love was the heart of the Buddha, so strongly did he wish to stress the importance of it in one who had a public mission to fulfil that he says, "If villainous bandits were to carve you limb from limb with a two-handed saw, even then the man that should give way to anger would not be obeying my teaching. Even then be it your task to preserve your heart unmoved, never to allow an ill word to pass your lips, but always to abide in compassion and goodwill with no hate in your hearts, enfolding in radiant thoughts of love the bandit who tortures you , and proceeding thence, to enfold the whole world in your radiant thoughts of love, thoughts great, vast and

beyond measure, in which no hatred is, or thought of harm"—One Brahmin, the head of a particular school, pointed out to a jealous disciple who was trying to prevent him from visiting Gotama, that in Buddha "All passion is dead, frailty abides not in him He preaches the consequences of acts and the principles of action lauding the avoidance of evil for righteous folk."—

At the same time there is the other side to this picture when angry Brahmins showed a definite hostility towards him, and then there is the well known occasion when Gotama's own cousin openly rebelled against him and started a rival Order of his own

Now going into further details regarding the Buddha's daily life, his usual practice and routine was to start the day some hours before sunrise. During this period he would sit in solitary meditation. He would hold communication with spiritual beings or devas In fact the hour before dawn appears to be a favourite time for many psychic manifestations, not only in the case of the Buddha but with his disciples as well. It was also the time when he would use certain psychic faculties in order to ascertain what individual in the neighbourhood, was ready to listen to his doctrine, or wished help in some way. If there was somebody, then sometime during the day that particular person would receive a visit from the Master

When the time for begging his food had arrived Gotama would robe himself and as is said in the Texts, "duly robed and bowl in hand", he would leave his abode and in the company of his disciples they would walk to the town or village where the people were expecting them.

Gotama insisted upon his disciples being decently clothed. The clothing which Buddha and his disciples

wore consisted of three lengths of cloth arranged over the body as they are to-day. Originally these robes were in whole lengths, but owing to a theft of a monk's new robe, the Master made a rule that all robes were to be made up in pieces.

So the lengths of new cloth were neatly torn into pieces, sewn together again in patches, copying the pattern of the village rice-fields, we see in India to-day. So to-day the Buddhist monks of Ceylon and Burma wear the patched robes according to this rule and for the reason stated.

When Gotama and his disciples arrived at a town, the people would come with flowers and scents, and after having expressed their devotion by such offerings, they would then conduct the Buddha and his disciples to various houses. Those who had the honour of giving Gotama his food would take his bowl, arrange a seat for him and offer the food. Then when the meal was finished the Master would give a discourse according to their desires. Sometimes, on such occasions, a number of lay people would publicly declare their devotion to the Dharma or Doctrine or Way of Life, some of them would even go so far as to renounce the world and take the yellow robes of the Order.

But very often Buddha and some of his disciples would be in part of the country where there were only village settlements, then he and his followers would beg for their food going from house to house, till a sufficient supply of cooked food was dropped into the stone bowls. One meal in the day was considered sufficient. To his disciples Gotama said—"I have only one meal in the day, and find that on this rule I am healthy and well, buoyant, hale and hearty. Do like me and you too will benefit in the same way."

Again on the question of food he gave the following reason for moderation. "You must train yourselves to moderation in food, taking food with a deliberate purposefulness, not for pleasure or delight, not for ostentation or display, but only to the extent required to support and maintain the body, to shield it from hurt and to foster the higher life".

In Buddhist countries, monks generally beg for their food, going from door to door till a sufficient supply of cooked food is put into the bowl. No monk is allowed to give any sign for indication of his wants on his begging round, silence being the rule on this occasion.

Or again, as it is found in Ceylon to day, a monk or a whole monastery will have devoted supporters who will provide them with clothing, food and medicine And to a Buddhist, however small his or her gift may be, the true merit connected with any gift, lies in the loving thought and wish of the donor before, during and after the giving.

Continuing our narrative, after the Buddha had returned from the town or village, he would retire to his residence and wait there until all his disciples had returned.

Now what sort of building did Gotama occupy? It might be a small building in a grove of trees, a building put up by a wealthy devotee or it might be a leaf hut, or he might accommodate himself under a tree.

Much would depend on the time he intended to stay in one place, and the place itself One of the chief places of interest to Buddhist pilgrims to-day is the ancient site of Savatthi, some distance north of Gorakhpur station Savatthi was a flourishing town in the Master's day About a mile and a half away from the town, the Buddha dwelt with his disciples in a large Park which had been specially

bought for the Order by a wealthy merchant. Here the Master had occasion to use this place, from time to time, for twenty years

Then when all the Almsmen had returned, the Master would give a short talk and give each of his disciples a subject for meditation, according to the ability of the individual, or to those who asked for help in this particular line The monks, after worshipping the Master, would go each one to his own abode in the locality, in order to spend some hours in their meditation.

If it was during the hot weather just before the break of the rains, Gotama would take a short rest, and would spend some hours in meditation and exercising certain psychic faculties, he would "see or survey the world", as it says in the Texts

Then in the cool of the evening, the people of the town or village would assemble in the lecture hall, which they had specially built for public discourses, and which would also be used for the administration of any public business. This hall would have a floor construction and a number of pillars supporting the roof It would be an open building, minus any walls. On the other hand we read that some Congress halls were elaborate buildings, where the floor was carpeted, oil lamps lit and special seats arranged.

Here the Master and some of his disciples would arrive. For an hour or so the people would listen to the doctrine being preached Then he would return to his residence, take his bath with the water which his attendant monk had placed for him. Afterwards Gotama would retire to his cell and for a short time would be plunged in meditation In the meantime his disciples from various places would assemble once again.

When the weather permitted and on moonlight nights, the Buddha would preach to his brethren

outside. Indeed it must have been a very wonderful sight to behold such an assembly composed of eminent disciples and Elders, all so attentive, so silent. Often we read in the Buddhist Scriptures, a chapter or Sutta, opening with the following description "On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near Savatthi in East Park. Now on that occasion the Exalted One was sitting surrounded by the Order of monks, that day being the sabbath (or full-moon day) Then the Exalted One, after scanning the Order of monks, as they sat in perfect silence, addressed the monks............

Or we may read another similar description ; "On the Sabbath of the full-moon at the end of the rains the Lord was sitting in the open in the moon-light, with the Confraternity gathered around him, when observing silence to reign among them all, he addressed the Almsmen in these words"—From all accounts the Buddha was insistent that silence should be maintained in the daily life of the monk and when they assembled together. When the Master accepted an invitation of any kind, he did so by silence, in other words, if he had nothing to say against it, he remained silent In his practical advice to his disciples he recommended on meeting each other, they have the choice of two things, either to talk about the Doctrine or else to preserve a "Noble Silence"

He and his followers were well known as "lovers of quiet", a condition which was not exactly applicable to some of the other schools which seemed to exist in a state of uproar and quarrel.

In these assemblies we would find the beloved Ananda, the personal and faithful attendant of the Buddha for so many years and who, possessing a wonderful memory, was able to repeat the exact words of the Master when he was called upon by the First Council, which met shortly after the death of

the Buddha. Then we would find other prominent disciples, such as Sariputta and Maha-Moggallana.

In fact these were the two chief disciples of the Buddha and it may interest you to know that the relics or ashes of these two disciples, Sariputta and Maha-Moggallana, which the Archæological Department discovered in their excavations, and which are now in a museum in London, will after this War is over, be handed over to the Maha Bodhi Society and brought back to this country where they rightfully belong.

Up to about ten o'clock at night, the assembly would listen attentively to their beloved Master. Some would ask questions on the doctrine, some would need advice over their meditation or else the Buddha would preach on a subject which was necessary to the whole community.

Now I have mentioned the word Meditation. This word covers a big field of thought in the Buddhist Way of Life. Meditation, or its Pali word JHANA, is of much significance Briefly there are four stages of Meditation or four Jhanas and the Fourth Jhana opens the entrance to higher knowledges, including psychic powers and to self-enlightenment.

It is therefore called "Padaka" or basic Jhana, and it was this particular state of mind which enabled the Buddha to communicate with the spiritual beings or Devas There are other Jhanas higher than this fourth one, but even to attain to the first Jhana or to the first Meditation, the disciple or the lay follower has to prepare himself or herself by the necessary discipline called the precepts, precepts which command right thoughts and right action during the moments of our daily life.

But apart from the special instruction which the Master gave to his disciples over meditation or the

Jhanas, he was insistent that his lay-followers should from time to time, train themselves and enter and abide in meditation, and so experience the wonderful and sublime happiness that comes of this seclusion

In one section of the Buddhist Scriptures, we have a treatise called the Visuddhi Magga, or the Path of Purity, in which is set out forty different subjects for Meditation Love, Pity, Sympathy, even-Minded-ness come under the classification of the Divine States, each of these four mentioned subjects is accompanied by detailed instructions, instructions which the Buddha himself gave The whole treatise is based on the Word of the Buddha, the treatise itself being the work of a Buddhist monk of Indian birth and its English translation is due to the Pali Text Society in England

Now returning to the last part of the Master's daily life, from about ten o'clock at night till two in the morning, Gotama would take his rest. After his disciples had all departed, Buddha would first of all take some exercise, or as it says in one of the Scriptures, the Sanyutta-Nikaya :

> "On another occasion, when the Exalted One had walked about for a great part of the night, he washed his feet, entered his cell, and took the lion's lying posture on his right side, placing one foot above the other, considering, mindful and deliberate, the idea of rising up again"—

Altogether the Master would sleep about three hours Too much sleep was not conducive to the training of a monk—"Delight in gossip, delight in sleeping, delight in company" were habits which the Master condemned in the Order.

Then, as you know, Buddha would rise up again at two o'clock in the morning.

I sincerely hope from this short address, I have been able to give you a fair idea of the daily life of India's greatest son.

As regards the language which the Master used, as far as scholars have been able to ascertain, he spoke in a language in use among the cultured laity, officials, nobles and merchants, and which is known to us to-day as Pali

His ministry lasted for forty five years During that time he toured through the Magadha country, which is now known as south Bihar, Gaya being the sacred place where the Master attained his Buddhahood The capital of Magadha during the Master's life was Rajagaha, or modern Rajgir He crossed the Ganges and spent many years in North Bihar In the Master's day the great city of the powerful Licchavi clan was Vesali, about forty miles north of Rajagaha. The people there were specially noted for their loyal devotion to him

The great Kosala Kingdom of his day, which is now more or less the United Provinces and which included Sarnath and the ancient city of Benares, knew about twenty years of his ministry.

TALKS ON THE GITA

BY

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

AKHIL BHARAT SARVA SEVA SANGH PRAKASHAN
KASHI (U P)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

I. INTRODUCTION : THE *YOGA* OF DESPONDENCY.

(1) At the heart of the Mahabharata

DEAR BROTHERS,

From today, I shall speak to you about *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. The bond between the *Gita* and me transcends reason. My heart and mind have both received more nourishment from the *Gita* than my body has from my mother's milk. Where the heart is touched, there is no room for argument. Leaving logic behind, I beat the twin wings of faith and practice and, to the best of my ability, fly up into the heavens of the *Gita*. I live and move in the atmosphere of the *Gita*. The *Gita* is my life's breath. To vary the image, I swim in the sea of the *Gita* when I speak of it, but when I am alone, I dive to the depths of this ocean of nectar and there rest at ease. It has been decided that I should tell you every Sunday the story of this Mother, the *Gita*.

The *Gita* has been set in the *Mahabharata*. Standing in the middle of the epic, the *Gita* is like an elevated lamp which throws its light on the whole of the *Mahabharata*. On one side of it, there are six *parvas*, and on the other, twelve. Similarly on one side there are seven divisions of the army, and on the other, eleven. In between, the *Gita* is being taught.

The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are the classics of our nation. The characters that figure in them have become one with our lives. For thousands of years now the whole of Indian life has been, as it were, consecrated by the heroes and heroines of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* like Rama, Sita, Dharmaputra, Draupadi, Bhishma and Hanuman. The characters of no other classics in the world have thus blended with the lives of the people. Looked at

in this way, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are undoubtedly wonderful works If the *Ramayana* is an enthralling ethical poem, the *Mahabharata* is a comprehensive treatise on the science of society Vyasa has in his hundred thousand *slokas* given us innumerable portraits, customs and heroic actions which are as beautiful as they are real. The *Mahabharata* tells us clearly that none but God is wholly free from blemish, that none too is an embodiment of absolute evil. On the one hand, faults are pointed out even in Bhishma and Yudhishthira, and, on the other, light is shed on the good points of Karna and Duryodhana. The *Mahabharata* describes human life as a fabric woven out of both black and white threads. Himself standing aloof, Bhagavan Vyasa projects on the screen of the world a picture, made up of both light and shade, of the universal movement. Because of this perfect detachment and the high literary skill of Vyasa, the *Mahabharata* has turned out to be a huge mine containing pure gold Let us now explore it and carry away from it all the wealth we can

The *Mahabharata* has become a byword for bigness; but has not Vyasa anything of his own to tell us ? Has he given in any place any special message of his own ? Where is Vyasa's heart-beat to be heard ? Again and again we come to jungle upon jungle of philosophy and preaching in the *Mahabharata* but has he also given anywhere the essence of all this, the central secret of this massive work ? Yes, he has Vyasa has, so to speak, taken out the cream of the whole of the *Mahabharata* and put it in the *Gita*. The *Gita* forms the epitome of the teaching of Vyasa, the quintessence of his thought. That is why Sri Krishna says : "I am Vyasa among the sages" This manifestation of Krishna in Vyasa becomes fullest in the *Gita*. From ancient times the *Gita* has been given the status of an *Upanishad*. The *Gita* is the *Upanishad* of *Upanishads*, because Lord

Krishna has drawn the milk of all the *Upanishads* and given it in the form of the *Gita* to the whole world, Arjuna is only an excuse. Almost every idea necessary for the flowering of a full life occurs in the pages of the *Gita*. That is why men of experience have said, truly, that the *Gita* is a treasure-house of the knowledge of *dharma*. Though small in size, the *Gita* is an important text of Hindu *dharma*.

Everyone knows that the *Gita* was spoken by Sri Krishna. The devotee *Arjuna*, who listened to this great lesson, became so identified with it that he too came to be called 'Krishna.' Vyasa, trying to express the heart of the Lord and his lover, lost himself so completely that he too came to be called 'Krishna'. The speaker is Krishna, the listener is Krishna, the reporter is Krishna—thus all the three have, so to speak, become one, each fulfilling himself in this oneness. To study the *Gita*, then, a concentration of this kind is necessary.

(2) Arjuna's stand

Some people think that the *Gita* should be taken to begin from the Second Chapter. If the actual teaching commences in the eleventh *sloka* of the Second Chapter, why not start from there? Someone even told me, "God has said that He manifests himself in 'अ' among the letters of the Nagari alphabet. Here the *sloka* '*asochyaanamasochastvam*' begins spontaneously with the letter 'अ'. So we should take that as the beginning." Apart from this argument, in many ways it would be quite right to take this as the beginning. All the same, the introductory portion preceding this does have a value of its own. Without this preliminary narrative we cannot properly understand where exactly Arjuna stands and what the *Gita* is intended to teach.

Some say that the *Gita* was spoken in order to remove *Arjuna's* weakness and make him enter the battle. In their view the *Gita* not only teaches *karma-yoga*, the way of action, but also *yuddha-yoga*, the way of conflict. But a little

thinking will show us how defective this argument is Eighteen divisions of warriors were ready for battle Are we to suppose that, by making Arjuna listen to the whole of the *Gita*, the Lord made him worthy of the army? It was Arjuna who quailed, not the army Was the army then more worthy than Arjuna? This is utterly inconceivable It was not out of fear that Arjuna was turning away from the battle He was a great warrior, who had proved his valour on a hundred fields When Uttara's cattle were carried off he routed Bhishma, Drona and Karna single-handed He was known as the undefeated, as the one true man among men. Heroism was in every drop of his blood, in the very marrow of his bones In order to rouse his feeling and goad him to action, Krishna Himself attributed cowardice to him, but this missed the mark Then He had to change His tactics and give a discourse on ultimate wisdom and immediate knowledge So then it is clear that the aim of the *Gita* is not anything so easy and simple as removing cowardice.

Still others say that the *Gita* is meant to cure Arjuna of his scruples based on non-violence and make him inclined to fight In my opinion this view also is not right In order to examine this thoroughly, we have first to see the stand taken up by Arjuna To do this, the First Chapter and its continuation in the Second will help us greatly

Arjuna stood in the field of battle with his mind made up, and sustained by a sense of duty. Fighting, the calling of the Kshatriyas, was in his very nature All possible attempts had been made to avoid war, but they had not succeeded They had pitched their claims at the lowest, and Sri Krishna himself had tried to mediate, but all in vain In these circumstances he has got together the kings of many countries, taken Sri Krishna as his charioteer, and is standing on the battle-field He says to Sri Krishna with heroic ardour: "Place my chariot between the two armies so that I can look

at the faces of the people who have come out ready to fight with me" Krishna did as he was told What does Arjuna see when he turns his gaze in all directions ? On both sides are gathered a thick surging throng of his own kinsmen and friends He sees grandfathers, fathers, sons and grandsons, four generations of his own people—family, friends and relations—finally determined to kill and be killed It was not as though he had not expected this But the actual experience strikes one with the force of a fresh impact.

When he sees all his own people gathered together, a storm begins to rage in his heart He feels downcast In the past, he had killed innumerable warriors in many a battle. But never till now had he felt so miserable, never had his bow, Gandiva, slipped from his hands, nor had his body quaked like this, nor his eyes become wet Then, why did all this happen now ? Was he moved by the spirit of non-violence now, as Asoka was to be later ? No, this was only attachment to his own people Even now, if those in front of him had not been his teachers, kinsmen and friends, he would have made their severed heads fly like so many balls. But his attachment confused him and overshadowed his devotion to duty , it was then that he thought of philosophy. When a man with a sense of duty is caught in illusion, even then he cannot bear to face the naked fact of his lapse from duty He usually covers it up with an enquiry into principles. Arjuna was just in this plight He began to declare ostentatiously that war was really a sin, that war would destroy the race, maim *dharma*, encourage moral anarchy, spread antinomianism, disturb the seasons and bring many other disasters upon society With such arguments he tried to enlighten Krishna Himself.

Here I am reminded of the story of a judge He had sent hundreds of criminals to the gallows, but one day his own son was produced before him, accused of murder. His guilt

was proved beyond doubt, the time had now come for the judge to pass sentence of death on his own son But then he began to hesitate He called all his ingenuity to his aid and began to argue thus · "The death penalty is most inhuman, inflicting such punishment is no credit to man. All hope of reform is destroyed The man who committed murder did so in the heat of excitement when he was beside himself. When the madness has passed from him, to take him coolly and calmly to the gallows and kill him is a disgrace to human society, it is a great crime" He thought up many such arguments If his own son had not been brought before him, the Hon'ble Judge would have gone on relentlessly condemning people to death for the rest of his life. But now, because of partiality for his own son, he argued thus This was not the voice of his inmost self; it was born of his attachment "This is my son," he thought; and from this sense of attachment sprang all these high-sounding words

Arjuna's behaviour was like that of the judge in the story. The arguments advanced by him were not in themselves wrong The whole world has seen precisely these consequences follow the last Great War But what we should think about is this that Arjuna had no real vision, it was only clever and superficial talk All this Krishna knew So, without paying any attention to Arjuna's words, he straightaway began to set about dispelling his illusion If Arjuna had actually been converted to non-violence, he would never have been satisfied until his real point had been met, however much he was told about wisdom and knowledge. But the *Gita* has nowhere answered this point of his, and yet Arjuna was satisfied The implication of all this is that Arjuna's attitude was not that of non-violence, he did believe in fighting As he saw it, fighting was his natural, clear and inescapable duty But he wanted to evade this duty because

his vision was clouded by illusion And it is on this illusion that the *Gita's* mace falls most heavily

(3) The purpose of the Gita : to destroy Illusion

Arjuna used not merely the language of non-violence, but even that of *sannyasa*, complete renunciation " Even a life of renunciation is better than this bloodstained *kshatriya dharma*," he says But was this the way of life for him, his *svadharma* ? Was this the true expression of his nature ? Arjuna could have cheerfully donned the garb of a *sannyasi*, but how could he have lived the life ? If, in the name of *sannyasa*, he went into the forest, he would start killing the deer there. Therefore, the Lord told him plainly, " Arjuna, your present reluctance to fight is delusion The nature that has become yours through the years will not permit you to refrain from fighting "

Arjuna felt at odds with his *svadharma* But however unattractive a man's *svadharma* may be, he has to find fulfilment by persisting in it, because it is only through such persistence that growth is possible. There is no question of dignity involved here This is the law of growth *Svadharma* is not the sort of thing that one takes up because one thinks it is noble, or gives up because it seems lowly In fact it is neither great nor small It is equal to our measure. In the words of the *Gita*, " *sreyaan svadharmo vigunah* ". (" One's own *dharma*, even if devoid of merit, is the best for oneself ") The word " *dharma* " means not the organised religions, like Hindu-*dharma*, or Muslim-*dharma*, or Christian-*dharma*. Every individual has his own distinct *dharma*. The 200 people who are in front of me have 200 different *dharmas*. Even my own *dharma* today is not what it was ten years ago ; it will not be the same ten years hence As the course of one's life changes through thinking and experience, one's old *dharma* drops off and a new *dharma*

comes in its place. One achieves nothing by self-willed obstinacy in this matter

However superior another's *dharma* may appear to be, it is not good for me to adopt it The light of the sun is dear to me By this light I keep growing The sun claims my worship too But if, for this reason, I wish to give up living on the earth, and go to the sun, I would be burnt to ashes. On the other hand, even if living on earth is quite dull by comparison,—even if the earth is quite despicable when compared with the sun, even if it has to borrow its light—even then, so long as I lack the capacity to stand the sun's power, I shall have to stay away from the sun and keep growing on the earth. If someone were to say to a fish, "Milk is costlier than water ; come and live in this milk," would it agree ? Fish can only live in water ; they will die in milk

Even if someone else's *dharma* seems easier, one should not take it up Quite often, it only appears easier If a man in household life is not able to look after his children properly and, getting disgusted, gives up the world, it will turn out to be hypocrisy and will even become burdensome At the first opportunity, his old habits and associations will re-assert themselves When a man goes into the forest because he is unable to bear life's burdens, the first thing he would do there is to build himself a small hut Then, to protect it, he would put up a fence Going on thus, he finds that there too he has to manage, if anything, a bigger household If a man's mind is truly detached, surely renunciation is not difficult for him There are many texts in the *Smrtis* which show how renunciation can be easy It is really a question of one's vocation One's *dharma* consists in following one's true vocation The question is not whether it is high or low, easy or difficult The growth must be real , the evolution must be a genuine process

But some imaginative people ask, "If *sannyasa*, the way of renunciation, is really always better than *yuddha dharma*, the way of conflict, why did Lord Krishna not make Arjuna a true *sannyasi* straightaway? Was this impossible for *Him*?" Of course, there was nothing that He could not do. But, in that case, what would be the meaning and purpose of Arjuna's life? What does he achieve himself? Almighty God has given us freedom And so, let every man make his own efforts, for that is where the fun lies Children find joy in drawing pictures themselves They do not like someone else holding their hand and drawing the picture for them If the teacher gives the answers to all the questions put to the child, how is the child's mind to grow? So the work of the teacher and the parents is only to make him attend, and help him with suggestions God guides us all from within He does no more than this. If, like a potter, He were to beat our clay and mould each of us into a pot, where is the sense in it? We are not just pots of clay We are the living consciousness

From all this discussion, you would have understood that the purpose of the *Gita* is to remove the illusion that stands between us and our *svadharma* Arjuna was perplexed about his *dharma*, a delusion had arisen in his mind over his *svadharma* As soon as Sri Krishna points this out, Arjuna himself admits it The *Gita's* main task is to remove this illusion, this sense of "mine," this attachment This is why, after Arjuna has listened to the whole of the *Gita*, Sri Krishna asks him, "Arjuna, you have got over the illusion, haven't you?" And Arjuna replies "Yes, Lord. The illusion has left me, my *svadharma* is clear to me" If then we put together the beginning and the end of the *Gita*, we see that its aim and effect is to remove illusion This is true not only of the *Gita*, but of the whole of the *Mahabharata* Vyasa said right at the beginning of the *Mahabharata*, "In

this epic, I am lighting a lamp to dispel the dark illusion that covers the heart of humanity"

(4) Who qualifies—the Pure of Heart

The introduction, which tells us about Arjuna's stand, has helped us greatly in understanding the rest of the *Gita.* We should of course feel grateful for this But it helps us in another way too In thus introducing Arjuna, the *Gita* reveals to us the innocence and straightforwardness of his mind The word 'Arjuna' itself means one who is candid, straight and simple by nature He opened out his heart and laid before the Lord all that he felt and thought. He kept nothing hidden and, in the end, he surrendered himself to Sri Krishna But to tell the truth, he had surrendered himself even at the beginning When he made Krishna his charioteer and entrusted to His hands the reins of his horses, even then, he had got ready to give into His hands the control of his mind and heart Come, let us also do it Let us not say, "Arjuna had Krishna' Where are we to find our Krishna?" Let us not get caught in the fallacy of historicity, that there was an individual called "Krishna." Krishna shines in the heart of each of us, the Inner Ruler He is nearer to us than the nearest So then, let us place all the flaws and falsehoods of our heart before Him and say, "Oh Lord, I take refuge in you You are my sole master, my *guru* Show me the right way I shall tread only the path you show" If we do so, He who drove Arjuna's chariot will drive ours too; we ourselves shall hear the *Gita* in His own voice, and He will lead us to victory

CHAPTER II

THE TEACHING IN BRIEF : SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND EQUANIMITY

(5) The special terminology of the Gita

Brothers, in the last Chapter we saw Arjuna's "*yoga* of despondency" When it is accompanied by innocence—honesty and simplicity—and surrender to God such as Arjuna's, even despondency becomes a *yoga*, a means of union with God This is what is called "The Churning of the Heart" (Fire used to be kindled by churning wood with a stick, and butter is made by churning milk) I have not called this stage "the *yoga* of Arjuna's despondency," with specific reference to Arjuna, the practitioner of the *yoga*, but I have given it the general name of "the *yoga* of despondency." Because, for the *Gita*, Arjuna is only the occasion We should not think that the Lord Pandurang came down to Pandharpur in Maharashtra for the sake of Pundalik alone ; for we see that, using that opportunity, he has stood here for thousands of years now, in order to redeem us all, dull creatures as we are In the same way, even though the immediate occasion for the *Gita's* compassion was Arjuna, it is really intended for all of us Therefore, a general title like "*vishada yoga*," "the *yoga* of despondency," seems preferable for the First Chapter The tree of the *Gita* springs as a sprout of the *yoga* of despondency and, after manifold growth, bears in the final chapter the fruit of "*prasada yoga*," "the *yoga* of grace" If God wills it, we too shall reach that stage during the term of our imprisonment

The *Gita* begins its teaching in the Second Chapter , and even at the very beginning, the Lord tells us the great truths of life In doing so, his idea is that once the foundations of the edifice, the basic principles of life, are well laid, raising the superstructure becomes easy I interpret the term

"*sankhya buddhi*" in the Second Chapter as the basic principles of life. We should now see what these fundamental principles are. But, before we do so, while discussing the word "*sankhya*," it would be useful if we clarify to ourselves the meanings of the technical words in the *Gita*.

The *Gita* has a way of using old philosophical terms in new senses. The evolution of thought takes place by the non-violent process of grafting new meanings on to old words. Vyasa is a good hand at this. That is why the words of the *Gita* have gained a wider meaning; they have remained so fresh and green that thinkers could discover in them different meanings according to their own needs and experience. All these interpretations are possible, each from its own point of view, and, as I understand it, we can interpret the *Gita* for ourselves without having to contradict any of them.

There is a beautiful story in the *Upanishads* which is relevant here. Once the *devas* (bright gods), *danavas* (dark gods) and men, all three went to Prajapati (the Creator) for advice. Prajapati gave all three of them the same word of advice, the one syllable "*da*". The bright gods said, "We *devas* are self-indulgent, the taste for sensual pleasures has taken hold of us. So Brahma, by the sound '*da*,' has told us to acquire '*damana*' self-control." The dark gods said, "We *danavas* are now very prone to anger, and hard-hearted, the Creator has advised us, by the sound '*da*,' to cultivate '*daya*' compassion." The men said, "We men are given to greed, and have become mad after piling up wealth, by saying '*da*', Prajapati has advised us to practise '*dana*,' giving of gifts." The Creator approved of all their interpretations, because they had each arrived at their meaning in terms of their own experience. While understanding the technical terms of the *Gita*, we should bear in mind this story from the *Upanishads*.

(6) The purpose of life : using the body for Svadharma

In the Second Chapter, three great truths are declared. First, that the spirit is deathless and indivisible. Secondly, that the body is transient. Thirdly, that *svadharma* cannot be thrust aside. Of these, *svadharma* is in the nature of a duty to be performed ; the other two have to be known and realised. In the First Chapter, I have already said something about *svadharma*. This *svadharma* comes to one naturally. One does not have to go out in search of one's own *dharma*. It is not as if we have dropped down from the sky and started walking on the earth. Before we were born, our society existed, our parents existed, our neighbours existed. We are born into this stream of existence. To serve the parents who gave me life becomes my duty from birth ; so too, the duty of serving the society into which I am born. The truth is that, as we are born, our *svadharma* is also born with us. But we can also say that it is there waiting for us even before we are born ; for it is the purpose of our being born. We are born to fulfil it. Some people say that *svadharma* is like one's wife ; just as the marriage-bond is considered indissoluble, the bond of *svadharma* also cannot be broken. But even this comparison does not seem to me to go to the heart of the matter ; it is only the second best. I would compare *svadharma* to one's mother. It was not left to me to choose my mother in this birth. It had already been determined for me. No matter what sort of person she is, there is no pushing her away. That is precisely the case with *svadharma*—it is inescapable. Besides *svadharma*, we have nothing else in all this world to rely on, to rest in. To disown one's *svadharma* is to disown oneself, to commit suicide. Only with its help can we move forward. That is why no one should ever let go his hold on *svadharma*. This basic truth has been firmly established.

Our *svadharma* comes to us with such ease and naturalness that we should cherish it without effort. But because of many

kinds of illusion, this does not happen , or else, it is performed with great difficulty ; or even if it is practised, it gets corrupted with many sorts of faults There are many external forms assumed by the illusion which strews with thorns the path of *svadharma* Yet, if we examine them, only one thing is at the bottom of it all, namely, a restricted and shallow identification of oneself with the body Myself, and those related to me through the body, set the limits of my expansion Anyone outside this circle is to me a stranger or an enemy. This identification with the body builds a wall around me and cuts me off , and the odd thing about it is that I regard only the bodies as " me " and " mine " Falling into this double trap of identification of oneself and one's people with the body, we start putting up all sorts of little walls Almost everybody is busy doing this Of these enclosures, one man's is larger, and another's smaller , but, after all, every one of them is a wall And it is no thicker than his skin One man puts up an enclosure called " attachment to family " and lives in it ; another builds and lives in an enclosure called " attachment to nation " One wall divides Brahmans and Non-brahmans, another divides Hindus and Muslims In this way, not one or two, but many such walls have been built Wherever you turn, you see nothing but walls Even inside this jail of ours, we have political and non-political prisoners, as if we could not live without these walls within walls But what is the result of this ? Only one thing the wretched germs of disease multiply, and the health which is *svadharma* is destroyed

(7) The purpose of life : awareness of the Self that transcends the body

In this situation, it is not enough to perform one's *svadharma* with determination Something more is required ; it is necessary to be awake to two other principles also One is : " I am not this mortal body , the body is only the outer

covering" The other is "I am the spirit that never dies, that cannot be cut up, that pervades everything" When these two principles are combined, one attains the perfect truth.

The *Gita* considers a knowledge of this truth so essential that it invokes this truth first, and brings in *svadharma* only later Some people wonder why these verses about the ultimate truth occur in the very beginning But to me it seems that if there are any verses at all in the *Gita* whose position can never be changed, it is these.

If this much knowledge is stamped on our mind, then *svadharma* will not seem hard to us Not only that, but anything not *svadharma* will seem hard It is not at all difficult to realise the indestructibility of spirit and the transience of the body, because both these are true and real But then, we have to reflect upon them We should turn them round and round in our minds We should train ourselves to belittle the body and exalt the spirit.

Look, this body changes every instant Who is not caught in the cycle of childhood, youth and old age? Modern scientists say that in seven years the whole body changes, and that not even a drop of the old blood remains. Our ancestors believed that the old body dies in twelve years That is why they fixed the period for atonement (*prayaschitta*) or penance (*tapascharya*) or study (*adhyayana*) as twelve years. We hear stories of how a son meets his mother after many years of separation, and the mother cannot recognise him This body that changes every moment, dies every moment, is this your true form? Night and day, the sewers of your body keep flowing, and even in spite of your indefatigable scavenging it never gives up its uncleanliness, is this body *you*? It is unclean, it is you who wash it It is sickly, it is you that treat it with medicine and water It fills three and a half cubits of space, you sport in the three worlds It is liable to endless changes, you witness these changes. It is liable

to death, and you ordain it When the distinction between it and you is so clear, why do you shrink into such smallness? Why do you say that only that which is related to your body belongs to you? And why grieve so much for the death of the body? The Lord asks, "My friend, is the destruction of the body a cause for grief?"

The body is like one's clothes When the old clothes wear out, we go in for new ones If one body were to stick for ever to the soul, the soul would be in a sad plight; it would stop growing, its joy would vanish, and the light of its knowledge would become dim. That is why the destruction of the body cannot be something to grieve over. Yes, if the soul could be destroyed, that certainly would be something to grieve over. But the spirit is indestructible; it is an unbroken, everflowing stream Many bodies settle on it for a while and then disappear That is why it is all wrong to get caught in the circle of the body's relations and to suffer with divisions and distinctions, saying, "These belong to me; those belong to others" Look, this whole universe is like a lovely shawl, and a little boy takes a pair of scissors and cuts it up into pieces. What childish and violent folly to use the body as a pair of scissors with which to cut up the universal spirit!

Really, it is matter for great sorrow, that in India, where knowledge of the eternal reality (*brahma-vidya*) was born, we can now see so many parties big and small, besides factions and castes, on every side And in our hearts lurks so much fear of death that one wonders whether there is any other place like this where people once conquered death but are now afraid of it. There is no doubt that this is a result of long subjection, but one should not forget that it is also a cause of that subjection.

Even the word "death" we cannot bear to hear. To mention death seems inauspicious to us. Jnanadev had to say

with great sorrow · "The word death they cannot bear ; they weep when someone dies." And if someone dies, what lamentation, what loud outcry ! Why, we think all this is a duty ! We even go further and hire professional mourners to do the weeping for us Even when death approaches, we do not tell the patient of it Even if the physician has told us that the patient cannot live, we would still keep him in the dark about it The doctor himself does not speak plainly , he empties bottles of medicine into him so long as there is breath in the body If instead he were to tell the truth, give him the comfort of courage, and direct his thoughts towards God, what a real help it would be ! But their fear is that under the shock this brittle pot might crack before its time But really, could this pot crack before the ordained moment ? And besides, if this pot that was due to crack two hours hence should crack right now, what difference does it make ? All this does not mean that one should become hard-hearted or loveless. But attachment to the body is not love. On the contrary, unless attachment to the body is put away, true love does not begin.

When attachment to the body goes, then one realises that the body is an instrument for service , and then the body also finds its real support and receives the honour due to it. But today we regard pampering the body as the sole purpose of our lives. We have forgotten that life is to be lived for the fulfilment of *svadharma* One has to foster and cherish the body because only so can one perform one's *svadharma*. The need is not just to satisfy the cravings of the palate It is all the same to the spoon whether you serve *halva* with it, or rice and *dal* It doesn't feel pleased in the one case or dissatisfied in the other The tongue too should be in the same happy position—it should, of course, have taste, but no pleasure or pain from it The body is to be paid its due hire—no more than that We have to use the *charkha* for spinning,

so it is necessary to oil it In the same way, we get work out of the body, and we have to give it fuel If we were to use it in this way, the body, though it is nothing in itself, can gain value and find its roots in the spirit But instead of using the body as an instrument, we lose ourselves in it, and stunt our spirit Thus the body, which already was of little intrinsic value, becomes even more worthless That is why the saints say firmly, "It is wrong to be attached to the body and those related through the body; dogs and pigs too are worthy of affection. This body and those related to you through this body—do not worship these alone, day and night, my friend Learn to recognise others too as belonging to you." The saints teach us thus to grow. Do we ever take anything of ourselves to anyone not a close relation or friend ? Do we ever do anything "to mingle soul with soul, to make self meet self ?" Do we let the swan of the spirit go outside this cage and breathe free air ? Does it ever occur to you to break through your accepted circle and say to yourself, "I will make ten new friends tomorrow ?" Making fifteen friends today and fifty tomorrow, shall I one day feel that the whole world belongs to me, and I to the world ? We write letters to our relations from the jail ; what is there so wonderful about that ? But would we write to a new friend released from prison—not a political prisoner, but a thief ?

The self is impatient to pervade the world It wants to gobble up all creation. But we shut it up in a cell. We have made a prisoner of it. We do not even remember that it exists From morning till evening we are busy minding the body Day and night we worry about how fat or how thin our bodies have become. One would think that there was no other joy in the world. Even beasts experience the pleasures of sense Will you not now taste the joy of giving away and of controlling the palate ? What joy there is in giving away a full plate of food to a hungry man, though you too suffer

from hunger ! Taste the joy of this experience. The mother, when she bears suffering for the sake of her child, knows something of this joy. Even when a man draws a small circle and calls it "his own," the unconscious aim is to taste the joy of growth in the self, for thereby, the self bound in the body comes out for a little while. But what sort of release is this ? It is like the prisoner coming out of his cell into the courtyard But this is not enough for the spirit The spirit wants the joy of unbounded freedom.

The essence of the matter is :—(1) The seeker after perfection (*sadhaka*) needs to leave the crooked ways of *adharma* (what is not one's dharma) and *paradharma* (someone else's *dharma*) and take the natural easy path of *svadharma* ; he should never let go the motherly security of *svadharma* (2) The body perishes every moment, understanding this, let him use it for the sake of *svadharma* When there is need, let him not hesitate even to give it up for the sake of *svadharma* (3) Let him be constantly aware that the self is indestructible, all-pervasive ; and let him remove from his heart the distinction of "mine" and "thine" The Lord tells us these basic principles of living. The man who walks in the way shown by the Lord will one day, without doubt, experience "through this human body itself the blissful state of *sat-chit-ananda*".

(8) How to achieve both : Renunciation of fruit

The Lord has indeed told us the truths of life, but the work is not complete with the mere telling These principles enunciated in the *Gita* are found already in the *Upanishads* and *Smrtis*. If the *Gita* merely repeated them, it would be no great distinction Its real merit is that it tells us how to bring these truths into practice It is in solving this great problem that the skill of the *Gita* consists

"*Yoga*" is the name of the art or process by which these principles can be put into practice in the actual living The word "*sankhya*" means principles or theory. "*Yoga*"

means art or well-doing Jnanadev bears witness "The art of living comes of itself to the *Yogis*." The *Gita* is full of both, *sankhya* and *yoga*, science and art, *sastra* and *kalaa* When science and art meet, life blossoms into beauty Mere science is a castle in the air One may understand the theory of music, but if one has not trained the voice and mastered the art of singing, then *nadabrahman* (God as sound) would not take shape for us That is the reason why the Lord has taught not only the principles, but also the art of applying them What then is this art ? What is the art which enables one to realise the transience of the body and the indestructibility and wholeness of the spirit, and so to practise *svadharma* ?

Behind a man's action there are generally two types of attitude One is the assured feeling, I shall enjoy the fruit of my action I have a right to it" On the contrary, there is a feeling, "If I am not to enjoy the fruit of my action, then I will not act at all" The *Gita* tells us of yet another attitude of mind or way of life, which says, "You must of course act, but don't think that you have a right to the fruit" The man who acts has no doubt a right to the fruit. But give up this right of your own free will *Rajas* says, "If I accept the work, I demand the fruit" *Tamas* says, "If I give up the fruit, I shall give up the work also" These two attitudes are like two brothers Therefore leave both behind and reach pure *sattvaguna* In other words, do the work, but give up the fruit, and giving up the fruit, do the work Before, or after, do not hanker after the fruit.

"Don't hanker after the fruit" says the *Gita* But it also insists that you should act with full energy and skill The action of the person who acts without desire should be much better than that of the person who acts with desire This is only proper, for the latter is attracted to the fruit, and a part, much or little, of his time and attention will be spent

on thoughts and dreams of the fruit. But all the time and all the strength of the man who has no desire for the fruit is devoted to the action. The river takes no rest, the wind knows no fatigue, and the sun can only shine and shine for ever. The disinterested doer, too, cannot but render unremitting service What action then can equal that of the man who thus always rejoices in action ? Also, balance of mind is itself a most noble quality, and this, one might say, is the patrimony of the disinterested doer. If, in a work of art, besides dexterity and skill of hand, there is also mental poise, we see in it a greater beauty.

Moreover, the difference between the disinterested worker and the worker with attachment is all to the advantage of the former. The man of desires looks at an act with the eye of self-interest : "The act is mine, and the fruit too is mine" Because of this, it does not appear to him a moral lapse if his attention strays a little from the work At most, it seems to him an error in execution But the worker without desire for the fruit feels in relation to his work a sense of moral duty So with concentration, he takes care that there is no shortcoming in his work. His work is more flawless However you look at it, renunciation of fruit is the most effective and noble principle And so we may say that renunciation of fruit is *yoga*, the art of living

Leaving aside the matter of desireless action, there is in action a joy which you cannot find in the fruit While performing an action for its own sake, one's absorption in it is itself a stream of joy If you said to an artist, "Don't paint pictures , I shall pay you for not painting," he would not agree If you said to the farmer, "Don't go out into the fields, or graze your cattle, or lift water from your wells ; we will give you as much grain as you ask for," if he were a true farmer, he wouldn't like this arrangement. The farmer goes into his fields early in the morning *Suryanarayana* (God

as the sun) welcomes him The birds sing for him The cattle crowd around him. He strokes their backs with affection He looks with loving eyes on the plants and trees that he has raised There is a pure, a *sattvik*, joy in these actions. And this joy itself is the foremost, the real fruit of action. Weighed against this, the outer, the material fruit is quite secondary

By taking man's attention away from the fruit, the *Gita* multiplies a hundredfold his concentration on his work The disinterested worker's concentration on his work is itself a kind of *samadhi* (an experience of oneness) It follows that his joy is many times greater than that of others. If we look at it this way, it becomes at once clear that desireless action is itself a great reward Does not Jnanadev ask, " The tree yields fruit Would you have the fruit yield further fruit?" When this body, like a tree, has brought forth the beautiful fruit of disinterested pursuit of *svadharma*, why look for any other fruit? Why should the farmer who has sown wheat, sell it and eat bread of millets ? Why grow bananas and, selling the fruit, buy chillies instead ? Eat what you sow, my brother But the world does not accept all this Though they have the good fortune to be able to live on bananas, they fling themselves on the chillies The *Gita* says, " Don't do this , but eat action itself, drink action itself, digest action itself " Everything else comes with performance of action. A child plays for the joy of playing The benefit of exercise comes of its own accord But the child does not think of this benefit. All his joy is in the playing

(9) Renunciation of fruit : two examples

This joy in action, saints have illustrated in their lives Sivaji the king had great regard for Saint Tukaram. Once he sent a palanquin to fetch Tukaram and made arrangements to receive him with honour But Tukaram was deeply distressed by these preparations He thought to himself, " Is

this the reward for my devotion ? Is it for this that I worship God ?" It seemed to him as if the Lord, by placing this fruit of worldly honour in his hands, was pushing him away He said ·

> " You know my heart , do you wish to get rid of this trouble from me ? Wicked is this trick of yours, Pandurang ! "

" My Lord, this plan of yours is far from good. You are trying to put me away with a little red bead You perhaps think you can get rid of the bother in this way. But, after all, I am not the disciple of such a poor teacher. I shall cling to your feet and never let go Devotion is the *svadharma* of the devotee , and the art of his life is to see that the tree of devotion does not put forth branches bearing other fruit "

The life of Pundalik shows us an even more profound ideal of renunciation Pundalik looked after his parents and served them. Being pleased with such service, the Lord Pandurang came running to greet him But Pundalik would not be beguiled by Pandurang, and refused to give up his duty of service Serving his father and mother was for him worship of God, true *bhakti* If a boy were to rob others and cherish his parents, or a patriot to be treacherous to other nations in his country's interests, the devotion of either could not be called *bhakti* It would be mere attachment Pundalik was not caught up in any such attachment to a form He thought to himself " This form that God has taken when he stands before me—is God only this ? Was creation a corpse before He appeared in this form ?" He said to God, " Lord, you have come yourself to bless me with this vision This I understand But I believe in the doctrine of ' AND ALSO.' I cannot accept that you alone are God To me, you are God. AND my parents too are God Since I am engaged in their service, I am unable to give you my attention Please

forgive me" So he pushed towards the Lord a brick for Him to stand on, and became absorbed again in his service to his parents Tukaram has taken up this occasion and says with great enthusiasm and wonder

"What mad love is this, that kept Vitthal waiting,
What brave folly to push a brick for Him to stand on!"

This doctrine of "AND" which Pundalik applied is part of the technique used for renunciation of fruit If the absorption in work (*karma-samadhi*) of the man who has renounced the fruit of action is deep, his outlook on life (*vrtti*) is broad, inclusive and balanced. For this reason, he never falls into the tangle of conflicting philosophies, nor does he let go his own principles He does not raise controversies like those the Gita talks of—"*Naanyadastiiti vaadinah*"—"Those who say that nothing else is," and "Only this exists—there is no other" On the other hand, his humble but firm attitude is: "This is true, AND that too is true But, for me, this is true"

Once a householder went to a *sadhu* and asked him, "In order to attain freedom (*moksha*), is it necessary to renounce the home?" The *sadhu* said, "Surely not Look, since men like Janaka have lived in palaces and found freedom (*moksha*), where is the need for you to leave the home?" Later, another man came and asked the *sadhu*, "Swamiji, can one attain *moksha* without leaving the home?" Now the *sadhu* replied, "Whoever said so? If one could stay at home and get *moksha*, were Suka and others, then, fools to renounce their homes?" When later these two men met, a loud dispute arose. One asserted, "The *sadhu* says we must renounce our homes" The other protested, "No, he says that it is unnecessary" Then both came to the *sadhu*, who said, "You are both right The way is in accord with the attitude of mind; the answer follows the question One should leave one's home; one need not leave one's home—both are true" This is the doctrine of "AND ALSO."

From the example of Pundalik one can understand how far the renunciation of fruit can take one. The temptation before Pundalik (the vision of the Lord) was much more subtle than the material temptation offered to Tukaram. But he was not taken in even by that If he had been, he would have been lost So then, once one's way has been chosen, it should be pursued to the end, even if the vision of the Lord crosses the path The body exists for the fulfilment of a purpose The vision of God is always in our grasp, how could it escape us ?

" When my heart is steeped in the love of you, who now can take away from me the sense of oneness with all ?"

It is to attain such love (*bhakti*) that one is born When the *Gita* says, " *maa te sango astu akarmani* " (Do not be attached to inaction), the meaning of this extends thus far, that while you act you must not retain even the *vasana* of *moksha*, the attachment to liberation or ultimate freedom from action Freedom from *vasana* is itself *moksha* What truck can *moksha* have with *vasana* ? When renunciation of fruit reaches this point, then the art of life has attained completeness and perfection, and shines like the full moon

(10) The Ideal Teacher

The *sastra* and the *kalaa*, the science and the art, have both been expounded—but even after this, the whole picture does not stand clearly before our eyes. Science is absolute and unqualified, art has quality, *sastra* is *nirguna*, *kalaa* is *saguna* But even a quality does not manifest itself to the eye, unless it assumes a form The *saguna*, if it is not given a form, may be as elusive as the absolute The way out of this difficulty is to behold the man in whom the quality has taken shape. This is why Arjuna says, " Lord, you have taught me the most important truths of life, and the art by which these can be brought into practice But the picture is not yet clear Will you not now illustrate them and show them in action ?

Tell me the marks by which one can know the man whose mind holds fast these principles, and whose every pulse spells out the *yoga* of renunciation Tell me about him whom we call the *sthitaprajna* (the steadfast seer), who shows us the profound depths of renunciation, who is absorbed in oneness with action (*karma-samadhi*), who is in firmness like the great Mount Meru How does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk ? What does he look like, how can one recognise him ? Will you not tell me all this, my Lord ?"

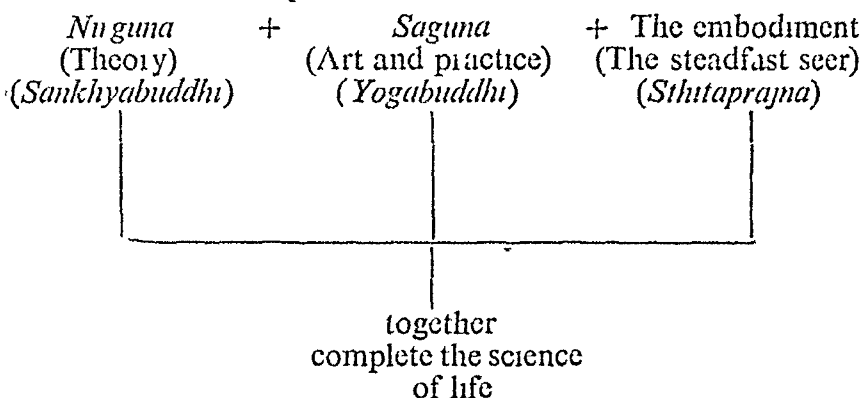
It is in answer to this entreaty that at the end of the Second Chapter, the Lord has drawn for us in eighteen *slokas* the heroic and sublime character of the *sthitaprajna* In these eighteen *slokas* he has distilled the essence of the eighteen chapters of the *Gita* The *sthitaprajna* is the ideal character of the *Gita* Even the phrase *sthitaprajna* is the *Gita's* own. Later, the *Gita* describes other figures in the same way—the *jivan-mukta* (the liberated one) in the Fifth Chapter, the *bhakta* (the devotee) in the Twelfth, the *gunatita* (one who has transcended differences) in the Fourteenth, and the *jnananishtha* (one steadfast in *jnana*) in the Eighteenth. But the description of the *sthitaprajna* is more detailed and revealing than the others Here, side by side with the marks of the *siddha*, the perfect one, we are also told of the qualities of the *sadhaka*, the seeker after perfection Thousands of satyagrahis, men and women, recount these qualities in their evening prayers. If they could reach every village and every house, what a happy thing it would be · but, assuredly, if they dwell in our hearts they would, of their own accord, spread outwards. If what we recite every day becomes mechanical repetition, then instead of impressing itself on the mind, it will fade out This, however, is not the fault of constant repetition, but of not thinking about it Along with constant repetition, constant meditation and self-examination are necessary

The *sthitaprajna* is the man of steadfast mind—the very name proclaims it But how can the mind be steadfast without self-control ? So the *sthitaprajna* is said to be the embodiment of self-control The mind being fixed in the self (*atman*) and controlling the *indriyas* (the organs of perception and action)—this is self-control The *sthitaprajna* reins in the *indriyas* and guides them into *karma-yoga*, the way of action To vary the image, using his *indriyas* as oxen, he ploughs well and cultivates the field of the disinterested performance of *svadharma* Every breath of his is used in this higher pursuit

This control of the *indriyas* is not easy. Perhaps, in a way, it might be easy not to use one's *indriyas* at all Silence and fasting are not so difficult The opposite, to leave one's *indriyas* free, of course comes easy to everybody But to do as the tortoise does, drawing in its limbs in times of danger, and using them when it is safe, to draw the senses away from objects, and to use them aright for higher services—this discipline is difficult For this, great effort and much wisdom are needed Even with all this, it is doubtful whether we shall reach the goal Are we then to despair ? No, the *sadhaka* (the seeker after perfection) should never lose hope If, after trying all the techniques of his *sadhana*, something is still lacking then let him call in faith, *bhakti*. The Lord has given us this very valuable advice in the course of his picture of the *sthitaprajna* Yes, he has given it in a few picked words But these few words are more valuable than cartloads of explanation, for *bhakti* has been brought in when the need for it is greatest We shall not here go into the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* in detail But I draw attention to it now, lest we should forget the essential place assigned to *bhakti* in all our *sadhana* Only God knows who in this world is a perfect *sthitaprajna* , but the figure of Pundalik always comes before my eyes as the example of the *sthitaprajna* who is

utterly given over to service—and that I have placed before you

Well, now the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* are complete, and the Second Chapter is over



What other fruit but *brahma-nirvana*, Liberation, can this tree yield ?

CHAPTER III

THE YOGA OF ACTION

(11) The infinite gains of renunciation of fruit

Brothers, in the Second Chapter, we glanced over the whole of the philosophy of life Now, in the Third Chapter, we shall explain this philosophy more clearly We began by considering principles , now we shall go into detail In the previous Chapter we discussed *karma-yoga* (the way of action) The great thing in *karma-yoga* is giving up the fruit of one's actions Yes, in *karma-yoga* one surrenders the fruit , but the question arises Does the fruit come to one, nevertheless, or does it not ? Thus the Third Chapter says that the *karma-yogi*, by giving up the fruit of his action, does not lose it, but paradoxically enough gains it in infinite measure.

Here one is reminded of the story of Lakshmi (the goddess of prosperity) It was her *svayamvara* (the day when she was to choose her husband) All the *devas* and *danavas* had come with hopes raised high , Lakshmi had not proclaimed her vow before She came into the assembly and said, " I shall garland only the man who has no desire for me " But then, they were all greedy people So Lakshmi began to search for the desireless one whom she could choose Now there appeared before her the form of Lord Vishnu lying peacefully on the serpent, Sesha She put the wedding garland round His neck and to this day she sits there, stroking His feet *Ramaa* (the goddess of beauty) becomes the slave of him who does not hanker after her That is the wonder of it

The ordinary man puts up a bristling hedge around his fruits , but by doing so, he loses the infinite fruit that should have been his The worldly man, after endless toil, receives a small reward ; but the *karma-yogi*, though he may do little, receives immense benefit The difference is due only to a

bhavana (an inward attitude) Tolstoy says somewhere . People talk a lot about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ ; but no one knows how much the worldly man runs about every day of his life and grows dry within ! He carries on his back the burden of two donkeys and capers about. Is not his suffering much greater, his plight far worse, than Jesus Christ's ?

The worldly people also do much penance ; but it is in pursuit of low aims We reap what we sow ; as is the desire, so is the fruit The world will not pay more for our wares than the price we ourselves mark on them. Sudama went to the Lord Krishna with a gift of flattened rice. The handful of rice may not be worth even a pie, but to Sudama it seemed beyond price, for his devotion went with it It was charmed rice Every grain of it was charged with his love. However cheap a thing may be, the *mantra*, the charm, increases its value, its power What, after all, is the weight of a currency note ? If we burn it, we might, perhaps, be able to warm a drop of water. But the stamp on it gives it its value.

This is the whole beauty of *karma-yoga* also. Action is like the currency note Its value is that of the *bhavana* (the feeling behind it), the stamp it bears, not that of the *karma* or outward action, the piece of paper. In a way, what I am telling you is the secret of image-worship itself There is great beauty in the idea of worshipping an image. Who can break this image ? This image, in the beginning, was merely a piece of stone I put life into it. I filled it with my *bhavana*, my feeling How can anyone destroy my feeling ? Stones can be smashed, but not feelings. When I withdraw my feelings from the image, then what remains will be mere stone , a thing which anyone can break to pieces

In other words, then, action is a piece of stone, or a piece of paper. My mother scribbled three or four lines on a piece of paper and sent it off to me ; another gentleman sent me a long discursive fifty-page letter Now, which is more weighty ? But the feeling in my mother's few lines is beyond measure ; it is sacred The other stuff cannot stand comparison with it Action must be moistened with love, filled with feeling (*bhavana*) We set a price on the labourer's work, and pay him his due wages But a ritual gift (*dakshina*) is not given like that. One sprinkles water on the *dakshina*, before giving it away

Here, one does not ask how much is given The important question is whether it was moistened or not,—whether there was love in it or not There is an entertaining passage in the *Manusmrti*. A student lived twelve years in his Master's house. He went there an animal, and came out a man. Now what fee was he to give his Master ? In olden days, the fees were not collected in advance. After studying for twelve years, one gave the teacher what was proper Manu says, "Give the Master one or two leaves and flowers, a fan or a pair of sandals, or a water-pot" Don't think this is a joke ; for whatever is to be given, should be given with the knowledge that it is a symbol of faith. What, after all, is the weight of a flower ? But in the eyes of devotion, it is equal to all creation "With a single leaf of *tulasi*, Rukmini weighed Giridhar, the Lord who lifted up a mountain" Satyabhama's ponderous jewellery was of no avail But when mother Rukmini laid a *tulasi* leaf, filled with devotion, on the scale, the thing was done. The *tulasi* leaf was charged with magic. It was no longer a common leaf. This is true of the action of the *karma-yogi* too.

Suppose two men go for a bath in the Ganga. One of them says, "What is this Ganga that people talk so much about ? Take two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen ,

is the means. The two attitudes are thus opposed to each other.

In describing the qualities of the *sthitaprajna* (the steadfast seer) in the Second Chapter, this distinction has been brought out in a striking way. When others are awake, the *karma-yogi* is asleep ; and when others are asleep, the *karma-yogi* is awake. Just as we take good care to keep our stomach filled, the *karma-yogi* is watchful lest even one moment should slip past without action. If he too eats, it is out of necessity. Because there is no help for it, he puts some food into his stomach The worldly man finds joy in eating ; the *yogi* finds it a hardship So he does not take pleasure in every morsel, as he tastes it He eats with self-restraint. The night of the one is the day of the other , and the day of the one is the night of the other. In other words, the thing in which one finds joy, in it the other finds pain, and *vice versa*. Though the actions of the worldly man and the *karma-yogi* look alike, the *karma-yogi's* distinction is that he has given up attachment to the fruit of his action, and finds joy in the action itself. The *yogi*, like the worldly man, eats, drinks, sleeps But his *bhavana*, his attitude to these actions, is different That is why, though there are sixteen chapters of the *Gita* left, still, at the very beginning, the figure of the steadfast seer, the *sthitaprajna*, the embodiment of self-control, is placed before us

The similarity and the difference between the actions of the worldly man and those of the *karma-yogi* are immediately apparent. Suppose the *karma-yogi* is engaged in the care of cows. With what outlook does he do it ? His *bhavana* (attitude) is that, by his service to the cows, society will get its fill of milk ; and that, through the cow, he will forge for himself a link of love with the lower orders of creation He does not do it for his wages The wages come to him all right ;

but the real joy and pleasure are in this pure *bhavana*, this spiritual outlook

The *karma-yogi's* action unites him with all creation. If we will not eat without first watering the *tulasi* plant, we create, by this resolve, a bond of love between ourselves and the vegetable kingdom How can I eat, while leaving the *tulasi* hungry ? Learning in this way to identify ourselves with the cow and the *tulasi*, we must attain oneness with the whole universe In the Mahabharata war, everybody, at sunset, leaves the field for evening prayer, but Lord Krishna unyokes the horses from the chariot, gives them water, rubs them down, removes the burrs from their bodies. What joy the Lord finds in this service! In describing this, the poet knows no weariness Picture it to yourself. The Lord Parthasarathi (the Lord as Arjuna's charioteer) feeds the horses from his yellow silk (*pitambar*), which he has filled with gram And thus you will experience in imagination the joy of *karma-yoga* Take it that every act is a noble, spiritual, consecrated act Take khadi work itself. Does the man who hawks khadi in the streets, with a bundle on his back, never get tired ? No, because he is absorbed in the thought that he has to feed the millions of his brothers and sisters in this country who are naked and starving. Selling this yard of khadi makes him one with *Daridra-narayana* (God in the form of the poor)

(12) Varied benefits of karma-yoga

In the *yoga* of desireless action, there is a miraculous power By such action, both the individual and society are richly blessed. The life of the man who follows his *svadharma* runs the even tenor of its course But, because he is always absorbed in action, his body keeps pure and healthy. And, as a result of his action, the society in which he lives prospers too The *karma-yogi* farmer will not cultivate opium or tobacco just because it will fetch a lot of money, for he has

related his work to the welfare of society. Action done as *svadharma* confers nothing but benefit on the community. The trader who believes that his business is for the good of society will never deal in foreign fineries His business advances the welfare of society The *karma-yogi* forgets himself and lives in identity with the community around him. Any society into which such *karma-yogis* are born will maintain order, prosperity and goodwill

The result of the *karma-yogi's* action is that while his life goes on smoothly, his body and mind are radiant, and society too prospers Besides these two benefits, he also receives the great gift of *chitta-suddhi*, purity of mind. "Purity through action," it is called. Action is a means to inward purity, but not the routine action of everybody. What brings about inward purity is the "charged" action of the *karma-yogi* The *Mahabharata* tells the story of the merchant Tuladhar (the balance-holder) A *brahman* called Jajali goes to him to find true knowledge Tuladhar says to him, "Brother, it is necessary to keep the beam of this balance always even" By constantly doing this external action, Tuladhar's mind too had become straight and sensitive Whether a child comes into the shop, or a grown-up person, his beam remains level for all, leaning neither this way nor that One's action transforms one's mind. The *karma-yogi's* work is a form of prayer (*japa*) His mind is purified by it, and the clear mind receives the image of *jnana*, true knowledge. Through his many separate actions, the *karma-yogi*, in the end, attains true knowledge. From the arm of the balance Tuladhar got mental poise As Sena, the barber, cleaned other people's heads, wisdom came to him "Look, I remove the dirt from others' heads, but have I ever removed the dirt from my own head, from my own mind?" The language of the spirit came to him through his work As he weeds his field, the *karma-yogi*

gets the idea of removing the weeds of habit and passion from his heart. Gora the potter kneads and moulds the raw clay and gives baked pots to the people ; from this he learns the lesson that his own life too is a pot that needs to be baked He can test with his fingers if a pot is baked or raw , he thus becomes a judge of saintliness. From this it is evident that the *karma-yogi*, through the terms of his own trade or occupation, gains knowledge of perfection What was their trade but a school of the spirit ? These actions of theirs were nothing but worship, nothing but service Viewed from without, these actions looked worldly, but inwardly, in reality, they were spiritual.

Another great benefit flows from the actions of the *karma-yogi* : Society has before it an ideal. In a community, it happens that one man is born before and another after. It becomes the responsibility of the one who was born earlier to set an example to those who come later. It is the responsibility of the elder brother to the younger brother, of the parent to the children, of the leader to his followers, of the teacher to his pupils, to set an example through his actions. And who but the *karma-yogi* is unceasingly devoted to his work, for in work only he sees joy. Thus false vanity loses ground in society Though the *karma-yogi* is contented within himself, he cannot live at all without work. Tukaram says, " What if I have found God by singing his praises, by *bhajan* ? Should I therefore give up my *bhajan* ? After all, *bhajan* has now become my nature."

" Having first kept good company,
Tuka became Pandurang
Why break the thread of *bhajan* ?
Why change one's very nature ? "

The *karma-yogi* has climbed up the steps of action and reached the top , but he does not even then lift his foot off the step. He cannot shake off action Work has become

second nature to his limbs In this way he continues to show to society the great use and value of the steps,—of service through performing *svadharma*

It is indeed a great thing to rid society of falsehood. Through hypocrisy and deceit, society decays If the *jnani*, the man of wisdom, were to sit in silence, others too would follow his example and sit with folded hands The *jnani*, with eternal contentment, loses himself in inner happiness, and remains quiet ; but the other, though inwardly weeping, becomes inactive. One is at rest because he is happy at heart , the other too is at rest though his mind is shrunken ! This state is terrifying It encourages vanity and hypocrisy. That is why all the saints, even after reaching the heights, have with good reason held on to the means, the apron-strings of action, have kept on performing their *karma* till death The mother delights in her children's games with their dolls. Though she knows that it is only make-believe, she joins in and creates in the children interest in the game. If she takes no part, the children would find no fun in it. If the *karmayogi*, because he is contented, gives up action, others, even though they have the need for it, will also give up action and therefore remain with hungry, joyless hearts.

Therefore the *karmayogi*, like the ordinary man, goes on working He does not think that he is in any way an exceptional person He exerts himself infinitely more than other men It is not necessary to put a stamp on any action and mark it as spiritual There is no need to advertise one's action If you are a perfect *brahmachari* (a seeker of the real), then let your actions show a hundred times more zest than other men's. Even though you get less food, do much more work ; let society get more and more out of you. Let your *brahmacharya* be seen in your conduct and dealings, as the fragrance of sandal spreads far and wide.

The essence of the matter is that the *karmayogi*, by surrendering the desire for fruit, receives an infinite reward. His life proceeds evenly He is radiant in body and mind. The society in which he moves is happy He attains inward purity and also *jnana* And society being rid of hypocrisy and deceit, the ideal of a perfect life comes within our reach. This, experience proves, is the greatness of *karma-yoga*.

(13) Obstacles in the course of karma-yoga

The *karma-yogi* does his work much better than others, because work to him is prayer, worship, ritual, work itself is a mode of worship (*puja*) I performed *puja* After the *puja* I received the food offered during the worship, as *prasada* (a token of grace) But is this the reward, the payment for my *puja* ? If a man performs *puja* for the sake of the food, he will of course get immediately this part of *prasada* But through the act of *puja*, the *karma-yogi* seeks to get the reward of the vision of God He does not estimate his action so cheap that it can merely fetch him a portion of the food offering He is not prepared to mark such a low price on his action He does not apply such gross measure to his actions When a man's outlook is gross, the fruit he receives will also be gross There is a proverb among farmers— " Sow deep, but sow moist " It is not enough to sow deep; there must be moisture in the soil too With both depth and moisture in the soil, the yield will be enormous So, the action should be " deep," *i e*, well-cultivated And it should also be moist with the love of God, with a sense of dedication The *karma-yogi's* actions are sown deep, and surrendered to God

We have developed some absurd ideas about the spirit. People imagine that once a man has become spiritual, there is no more need for him to move hand or foot, or do any work. They say, " What sort of religious man is this, who ploughs the fields and weaves *khadi* ? " But nobody asks how a

spiritual man can eat food The God of the *karma-yogi* brushes down horses. At the Pandavas' *Rajasuya* sacrifice He clears the leaf plates after the feast. He goes out into the forest to graze cows. If the Lord of Dvaraka went back to Gokul again, He would tend cows, playing on His flute. So the saints have pictured a *karma-yogi* God who rubs horses down, takes cows out to graze, drives a chariot, cleans dishes and mops up floors. And they themselves have done the work of a tailor, or a potter, or a weaver, or a gardener, or a trader, or a barber or a cobbler Doing these things, they have found themselves and become free.

People slip from the religious observance of *karma-yoga* for two reasons. In this connection, we must remember the specific nature of our *indriyas* Our senses are caught up in dualities, such as likes and dislikes. For the things we want we feel an attachment, or fondness, and an aversion for other things. Thus attachment and aversion, desire and anger, gnaw into a man and eat him up How noble, how beautiful, how infinitely rewarding *karma-yoga* is! But desire and anger tie round our necks this perpetual rattle, "Take this, and leave that," and we trail this behind us day and night That is why, at the end of this Chapter, the Lord rings the warning bell, so that we may shake off this encumbrance and save ourselves The *karma-yogi* should become, like the *sthitaprajna*, an embodiment of self-control.

CHAPTER IV

VIKARMA—THE KEY TO KARMA-YOGA

(14) How Vikarma helps Karma

In the last Chapter we discussed the *yoga* of desireless action. If we give up our *svadharma* (one's own *dharma*) and take over another's *dharma*, it is quite impossible to attain the goal of desirelessness. It is the merchant's *svadharma* to sell wholesome and necessary goods. But when he gives up his *svadharma* and starts selling luxuries got from across the seven seas, the motive is mercenary. How then can that action be free from desire? Cherishing one's *svadharma* is therefore indispensable, if one is to free one's action from desire. But even the pursuit of *svadharma* can be full of desire. Let us take even the matter of non-violence (*ahimsa*). To the devotee of non-violence, violence is of course unthinkable. But it is possible to be non-violent in externals, and yet in fact be filled with violence; for violence is a quality of the mind. It is not as if by abstaining from violent action outwardly, the mind becomes full of non-violence. Drawing the sword proclaims the attitude of violence; but it is not true that by dropping the sword a man becomes non-violent. The practice of *svadharma* is exactly like this. To be free of desire, it is essential to keep clear of others' *dharma*. But this is only the first step towards freedom from desire. With this alone, we have not reached the goal.

Desirelessness, too, is a quality of the mind. As a means of creating this, the pursuit of *svadharma* is not enough; other aids are needed. To light a lamp, one needs not only the oil and the wick, but a flame. When the lamp is lit, the darkness disappears. How is this lamp to be lit? For this, we need to purify the mind. By self-examination, we have to cleanse the mind of its dirt. At the end of the

Third Chapter, the Lord spoke of this important matter, and from it the Fourth Chapter takes its origin.

In the *Gita*, the word "*karma*" (action) is used in the sense of *svadharma*. Our eating, drinking, sleeping, are all actions, but it is not these actions that the *Gita* refers to when it talks of *karma* *Karma* there means the practice of *svadharma*. But in order to achieve freedom from desire through the practice of *svadharma*, something more is necessary—victory over *kama* and *krodha*, craving and anger. As long as the mind is not as pure and peaceful as the waters of the Ganga, desirelessness will not come to us These actions performed to purify the mind, the *Gita* calls "*vikarma*" The three words, "*karma*," "*vikarma*", and "*akarma*," occurring in the Fourth Chapter, are of the utmost importance. *Karma* is the concrete, outward action performed as *svadharma* The participation of the *chitta*, the mind and heart, in this external action is "*vikarma*." We bow our heads to someone, but if, while we are doing this, the heart too does not bow, the external act is meaningless The inner and the outer must become one I worship the *Siva-linga*, perform *abhisheka*, by bathing it in a continuous stream of water. But if, as I do this, the stream of my meditation too is not unbroken, what is the value of this ritual ? Then the *Siva-linga* is a stone, and I am another. It only means that two stones confront each other The *yoga* of desireless action is achieved only when the outward action is combined with the purity of the mind within

When we say "desireless action," the word "desireless" is more significant than the word "action", just as in "non-violent non-cooperation," the adjective "non-violent" is more important than "non-cooperation." If we leave out the non-violence and hold on to the non-cooperation, it could become a terrible thing. In the same way, if the

vikarma of the mind does not enter into the performance of *svadharma*, it would be a mockery

The people who do social service today are only performing their *svadharma* To serve people who are poor or lame, or are unhappy and in difficulties, and to make them happy, is the *dharma* that falls to us in the ordinary course. But we should not therefore conclude that all social workers have become *karma-yogis* If the attitude of mind (*bhavana*) in social service is not pure, it can become a terrifying thing. All the egotism, the hatred and envy, the self-seeking and other distortions that we develop in serving our own families, all this we develop too in social service We see with our own eyes how this happens, in the conflicts of social service organisations today

(15) Karma + Vikarma = Akarma

The mind must stand united with the action , this application of the mind, the *Gita* calls "*vikarma*" There is the common action, which is outwardly one's *svadharma*, and there is the special inward action This special action varies with the needs of each individual mind Many kinds of *vikarma*, with typical examples, are given in the Fourth Chapter These, the *Gita* develops from the Sixth Chapter onwards Only when we perform this special *karma*, when we unite the mind with outward action, does the light of desirelessness shine in it When *vikarma*, the action of the mind and heart, enters into *karma*, the outward action, desirelessness grows within us, little by little As long as the body and the mind remain separate, each has its own distinct means of growth When we bring them together, the goal is within our reach Lest the body and the mind should go different ways, the great moralists have shown a two-fold path—in *bhakti-yoga* (the way of devotion) they mention penance (*tapas*) without and meditation (*japa*) within. When inwardly, the mind does not meditate,

outward forms of penance, like fasting, are entirely wasted While doing penance, the inward flame, the *bhavana*, should constantly burn and shine The very meaning of the word "*upa-vasa*" (fasting) is "to dwell close to God" It is in order that our minds and hearts may stay near God that we have to close the door against the pleasures of the senses. But if we give up the pleasures of the senses and do not think of God, of what value is the physical act of fasting ? If, instead of thinking of God, we think of things to eat and drink, the fast would be more fearful than a feast ! There is nothing as terrible as this mental feasting, as thinking about pleasures *Tantra* must be accompanied by *mantra*, action by meditation Action as such has no value, nor mere meditation without action The hand and the heart must work together to render true service

If the outward action is not moistened by the heart's affection, then the performance of *svadharma* would remain barren , it would not bear the flower and the fruit of desirelessness Suppose we are nursing a sick man If in such service to the sick, there is no compassion, it would become dull and disgusting to us, and a burden instead of a relief to the patient Moreover, where the heart is not engaged, egoism too would show its head We would entertain expectations like this "I served him today He should serve me at my need ; he should admire and praise me" Or else, we get fed up and say, "I do so much for him, and yet he keeps complaining" Sick men are usually peevish —and those who nurse them without the true spirit of service will only be disgusted by this

When the inner feeling goes with the action, the latter is transformed into something unique When the flame is applied to the wick in the oil, light is born When *vikarma* is applied to *karma*, desirelessness comes into being When a spark touches the gunpowder, it explodes A power is

released from the gunpowder. The mere act, the *karma*, is like powder, which has to be activated by the fire of feeling, *vikarma*. The power that *karma* develops at the touch of *vikarma* is indescribable. A pinch of lifeless powder in one's pocket blows up a whole body when a spark lights on it In the same way, the infinite power of the practice of *svadharma* lies latent Touch it with *vikarma*, and see what work it can do ! In the resulting explosion desire and anger are destroyed, and the way made clear for the attainment of supreme wisdom.

Action (*karma*) is thus the wick of the lamp of knowledge (*jnana*) There is a log of wood lying somewhere , when you set fire to it, it becomes a mass of glowing embers What a difference between that wood and this fire ! But it is the wood that has become this fire. When you apply *vikarma* to *karma*, the latter begins to acquire divine radiance. The mother strokes her child's back. A hand moves up and down a back, and no more. But who can describe the feelings arising in the hearts of the mother and the child from this commonplace action ? But if you frame an equation that if, on a back of such length and such breadth, a hand of such weight and such softness is moved, so much joy will result, it would be absurdly comic The action of the moving hand is quite insignificant—but the mother has poured her heart into it, she has added *vikarma* to it It is this that causes the thrill of joy There is a situation in Tulasi's *Ramayana* The monkeys were returning from a battle with the *rakshasas*, with their bodies wounded and bleeding. But when Rama's loving look rested on them for a moment, all their pain vanished Now, if someone else had taken a photograph of Rama's eyes and look at that moment, and carefully opened out his own eyes in the same way, could this have the same power ? The very attempt would be ridiculous

When *vikarma* is combined with *karma*, a power is released which results in *akarma* (inaction in action). The huge log of wood burns and becomes a handful of ashes, with which we can joyfully smear our bodies In the same way, the fire of *vikarma* reduces *karma* to the ashes of *akarma* What is the relation between the wood and the ash? "*Kah kena sambandhah*?" (What is the relation, and with what?) They have no common properties, and yet there is no doubt that the ash came from the wood

Now, what do we mean by saying that, by pouring *vikarma* into *karma*, it becomes *akarma*? We mean that, while acting, we seem not to act, we do not feel the burden of action. Though we act, we are not the doer The *Gita* says, that though you have slain, you are not the slayer. The mother beats her child, if you try doing the same, the child will not stand it. But when the mother beats her child, he still goes back to her and hides his face in her lap—for there is *chitta-suddhi*, purity of heart, behind the mother's outwardly harsh action. Her punishment of the child was disinterested. It had no selfish motive. By *vikarma*, by inner purity, *karma* ceases to be *karma* That look of Rama's, because of inward *vikarma*, had become a mighty ocean of the healing of love, but the action cost Rama no effort An action performed with pure heart does not attach itself to us. It leaves no residue of sin or merit, *punya* or *papa*, else, what a heavy pressure of action would our hearts and minds have to bear! If the news gets abroad at 2 o'clock today, that all political prisoners are to be released tomorrow, people gather together from all sides, and what confusion, what tumult! The problem of morality, the goodness and badness of actions, distracts us. We feel that action crowds in on us from all sides, we feel that it has caught us by the throat. Just as the waves of the sea dash with force against the land and make channels into it, the complexity of action (*karma*),

enters the mind and agitates it The quality of pleasure and pain, *sukha* and *duhkha*, develops , all peace is lost. The action takes place, and is over, but its force remains behind Action corrupts the mind, and destroys sleep.

But if, with *karma*, we combine *vikarma*, then, however much work you do, you will not feel its strain The mind becomes still, steady and radiant, like the pole-star. When you put *vikarma* into *karma*, it becomes *akarma* , it is as if you wrote *karma* on a slate, and then rubbed it out.

(16) The art of akarma—learn it from the saints.

How does *karma* become *akarma*—how does action become inactivity and inactivity become action ? From whom can we learn this art ? From the saints, of course. At the end of the Fourth Chapter, the Lord says, " Go to the saints and learn from them " In describing how *karma* becomes *akarma*, the powers of language are exhausted. To see it fully, we have to sit at the feet of the saints. The Lord is pictured as "*saantaakaaram bhujagasayanam*"—he is asleep and at rest on the coiled power of Sesha, the thousand-headed serpent In the same way, the saints, though engaged in a thousand actions, do not allow a ripple to arise in the still waters of their mind One can never understand this miracle until one goes to a saint and sees it

Now-a-days books have become very cheap. For an anna or two, one can get books like the *Gita* and " *Manache Slok* " (a Marathi book by Samarth Ramdas) And of *gurus* there is no lack. Education too is widely spread and costs little. Universities seem to distribute knowledge in neat little packets But no one seems to be satisfied with feeding on this nectar of knowledge The more one looks at this mountain of books, the more one realises how necessary it is to serve the saints It looks as though wisdom is held fast within the thick binding of these books, and cannot

come out. On such occasions I am reminded of a Marathi *abhang* .—

> In front of me stand the high mountains of craving and anger
> Far, far beyond them is the Infinite

Beyond the high mountains of craving and anger dwells the Lord Narayana In the same way, behind these book-heaps, the King of Knowledge sits hidden Though surrounded by libraries and reading rooms, man everywhere still remains a monkey without culture or knowledge Once in a big library in Baroda, a gentleman was taking out a fat volume with pictures in it He thought it was in English. I asked him what book it was, and he thrust it forward. I said, "But this is French," and he replied, "So it has turned out to be a French book, has it ? So you know French, do you ?" Clear Roman letters, fine pictures, and a beautiful binding—isn't this knowledge enough ?

In English alone, tens of thousands of books are published every year. You may take it that this is so in other languages too. Though knowledge spreads so rapidly, how does man's mind manage to remain still empty ? One man says that human memory is getting weaker , another, that men are losing the power of concentration , still another, that whatever he reads seems true to him, and he cannot discriminate ; yet another declares, "My dear Sir, I have no time to think" The Lord Krishna says, "Arjuna, you have been listening to far too many things, and your mind is dazed Till it gets steady, you will not see the way clearly. Stop reading books and listening to people, and now take sanctuary with the saints There you can read the book of life" There, as Sankaracharya says of the Lord Dakshinamurti, "The *guru's* speech is silence , the disciples, freed from doubt." By going there you will understand how utterly serene the mind can be while performing continuous service , you will understand how, though action rages without, the heart can be tuned to produce unbroken music.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO ASPECTS OF AKARMA—YOGA AND SANNYASA

(17) Outward action—a mirror of the mind

The world's ways are terrible. *Samsara*, life in the world, has been compared to an ocean. In the ocean, wherever you look, you see nothing but water ; *samsara*, too, is like that It surrounds you on all sides. If one gives up hearth and home and takes up public service, there too he finds that the same *samsara* pitches its tent in his mind and occupies it If one goes and sits in a cave, one's palm's-width loin-cloth is the warp and woof of *samsara* The loin-cloth becomes for him the essence of all possessiveness. Just as a little currency-note holds a thousand rupees, the little piece of cloth holds boundless attachment Because one renounces one's family, narrows one's circle, *samsara* has not therefore relaxed its hold on one ; by reducing one's possessions, one does not reduce one's possessiveness. Whether you say 10/25 or 2/5, it means the same. Whether at home or in the forest, attachment is ever with us. The pressure of *samsara* is no lighter. If two *yogis* went and dwelt in the caves of the Himalayas, even there, if one comes to hear of the other's fame, he burns with envy. Even in the field of public service, one sees the same thing

The universe of *samsara* pursues us in such a way that, even when we live within the bounds of *svadharma*, it never lets us go Though one has given up all distracting activities and complications, and has retained *samsara* only in name, one still remains filled with possessiveness, *mamatva* *Samsara*, like any *rakshasa* (demon), can assume a larger or smaller form Big or small, a *rakshasa* is a *rakshasa* What is inescapable is the same wherever you are, in a palace or in a hut Even if, with the hoops of *svadharma*, you bind

the bale of *samsara*, and keep it of uniform weight, then too all sorts of troubles arise, and you become disgusted. Even in your *svadharma* you will get entangled with persons and institutions, and will exclaim, "How did I get into this mess ?" But only then is your mind tested on the touchstone. Merely by making one's own the practice of *svadharma*, one does not become untouched by *samsara* Reducing the area of one's activity is not the same as being unattached

How then can we achieve detachment ? We should put into the effort the whole of our mind Without the mind's help, nothing can succeed We see how a boy whose parents have sent him to a school where he gets up early in the morning, drinks no tea and performs *suryanamaskar* (Sun-worship with its rhythmic exercises), goes back home and, in a few days, reverts to his old habits. A man is not a lump of clay. If we wish to give a certain shape to his mind, after all. the mind must receive it If the mind does not accept it, then we have to admit that all this education from without is useless So, in the process of growth, the co-operation of the mind is essential.

As a means of growth, external action, the performance of *svadharma*, and the inward attitude of the mind, *vikarma*, both are needed The external action is of course necessary. If you do not act, you cannot test your mind In the stillness of early morning, our minds seem perfectly calm—but the moment a child cries, we see what our peace of mind is really worth So we achieve little by rejecting action. External actions reveal the real quality of our minds The surface of the water is clear , but throw a stone into it, and at once the mud rises up. Our minds are just like that. At the bottom of the still lake, there is knee-deep mud It is only when an object from without touches it that one can see it We say in our languages, "Anger has come to a

man" Did that anger come from without ? No, it was within—else it could never have shown itself

People say that they prefer coloured khadi to white, because "coloured khadi doesn't get dirty" But that too gets dirty ; only, dirt does not show on coloured khadi, while it shows up on white It cries out, "I am dirty ; wash me, please" People do not like khadi that tells tales Our *karma* (action), too, talks It proclaims that we are given to anger, or selfishness, or something else. *Karma* is the mirror which shows us our true form We should, therefore, be grateful to *karma* Would we smash a mirror because it shows us a dirty, ugly face ? On the contrary, we should thank it and go and wash our face, and come back and look at ourselves in the mirror Similarly, if through *karma* the defects and weaknesses of our mind come out, should we then wish to avoid *karma* ? Will our minds become pure by our turning away from *karma* ? So let us continue to act, and make progressive efforts to make the mind pure

A man goes and sits in a cave, cut off from all human contact He imagines that he has attained perfect calm of mind But let him leave the cave and go out to beg for his food A mischievous little boy rattles the bolt of a door, and is absorbed in contemplating the noise it makes, but the *yogi* cannot bear the music that the innocent child makes and enjoys By living in a cave, he has made his mind so weak that he cannot stand the slightest jolt A little rattling noise shatters his peace of mind It is not good that one's mind should be in such a weak state

Which means *karma* is a very useful thing to enable us to understand what our minds are like When defects come to light, we can get rid of them. If they are hidden from sight, progress is obstructed and growth comes to an end When we act and discover our own defects, we are impelled to employ *vikarma* to remove them When this effort of *vikarma*

goes on day and night within, then we shall learn in due time how, while performing *svadharma*, one can remain unattached, and get beyond *kama* and *krodha* (craving and anger), *lobha* and *moha* (greed and delusion) If we endeavour constantly to keep action free of impurity, then, later, pure *karma* will go on of itself When once actions do not distort the mind, but take place naturally, one after the other, we do not notice that they have taken place at all When *karma* becomes natural and normal (*sahaja*), it becomes *akarma*. As we have seen in the Fourth Chapter, it is this *sahaja karma* that we call *akarma*. How *karma* is transformed into *akarma*, and how we can learn this art at the feet of the saints, this too the Lord has taught at the end of the Fourth Chapter. Words cannot describe this state of *akarma*

(18) The state of akarma

To understand the naturalness of action, let us take a familiar example When a child first learns to walk, how much effort he has to put into it ! But to us it is a delight to watch this game We say, "Look, baby is beginning to walk !" But later, walking becomes natural He walks and he talks He does not think about it It is the same with eating. We celebrate "*annaprasan*" (a ceremony performed when the child is first given solid food), as if eating is a great accomplishment But, in course of time, eating becomes quite natural How hard it is to learn to swim ! At first, we struggle for breath, but a time comes when we go for a swim to shake off fatigue Now, swimming is no effort , swimming has become second nature to the body Fatigue is a state of mind When the mind is consciously engaged in the action it feels tired , but when action becomes natural, it ceases to weigh on us *Karma* has become *akarma* It is full of joy

Our ideal is to make *karma* turn into *akarma*—to this end, we should perform the *karma* which is our *svadharma*.

In doing so, our failings come to light, and to remove these, we should hold on to *vikarma* Through such continuous practice, the mind will reach a stage where it will not feel the slightest effort or disgust in action Though thousands of actions are done by our hands, the mind remains clear and calm. If you look up and question the sky, " Brother sky, do you not get scorched by the sun, and wet with the rain ? Don't you shiver with the cold ?" what answer do you expect ? Will it not say, " You can settle what happens to me , I know nothing "

" Whether the man who is mad
Is naked or clad,
Is a matter which bothers
Only the others "

This means that when we go on performing actions which are our *svadharma*, in order to purify the mind with the help of *vikarma*, these actions become natural to us. Even the most trying situations do not seem difficult This is the key to *karma-yoga* If you try to force open a lock without a key, you will only bruise your hands ; with the key, you can open it in no time This master-key, which eliminates all strain and trouble, one gets by conquering the mind So one must strive incessantly to achieve control over the mind. In other words, one should wash off the dirt that appears in the mind in the course of action Then outward action will cease to cause trouble ; even the feeling that " I am the doer " will vanish , *kama* and *krodha*, craving and anger, will lose their power , there will be no trace of effort. Even the awareness of action will not remain

Once a good man wrote to me, " We have to do *japa* (recitation) of *Ramanama* a certain number of times Please do join us in this, and let me know how many you can do in a day." The poor man was acting to the best of his knowledge. I am not saying this with the idea of criticising him.

But *Ramanama* is not the sort of thing to be measured or counted The mother tends the child Does she ever want to publish reports on it ? If she cared for publicity, we could say, "Thank you," and discharge our debt to her. But she protests, "What have I done ? I've done nothing Is this a burden to me ?" When, with the help of *vikarma*, a man applies his mind, and acts with full heart, it ceases to be *karma* and becomes *akarma* In such action, there is no question of strain, confusion or fatigue

It is impossible to describe this state We can only form a hazy picture of it in our minds. When the sun rises, does the idea enter its mind to say, "I shall banish the darkness, I shall urge the birds to fly, and set men working" ? The sun just stands still, where it rises But the very fact of its being makes all the world go round But the sun is not aware of this If you said to the sun, "O Sun-God, the help you give is infinite, how much darkness you have dispelled !" it would make no sense to him He would say, "Bring a little darkness and show it to me If I can dispel it, I shall accept that I am the doer and do all this" How can one carry darkness to the sun ? Because the sun exists, darkness keeps off In the light of the sun, one man may read a good book , and another, an obscene one ; one may set fire to his neighbour's house, another help a neighbour. But the sun is not responsible for the good or the evil of these acts The sun says, "Light is my nature What else but light could there be in me ? I am not aware that I am shedding light For me, to be is to shine I am not aware of the strain of giving light I do not feel that I am doing anything"

The giving of light (*prakash-dan*) is natural to the sun. The saints too are like that Their very life is a gift of light. If you tell a *jnani*, "Sir, you are a great man, you speak the truth," he would answer, "If I do not follow truth, what else

could I do ? I am doing nothing special" There is no room for untruth near the *jnani*

Being thus is the basis of *akarma* The actions become so much a part of one's being and nature, that one is not conscious of their happening The senses get used to them Actions become worship, and speech moves to virtue, for *karma* has become *akarma* The *jnani* performs good actions as naturally as the birds sing As the child thinks of its mother, so, inevitably, the saint thinks of God Every morning, the cock crows ; this is its natural function Panini, the grammarian, chose this as an example, when he was teaching *svaras* to his pupils From the days of Panini, right up till now, the cock crows every morning But no one ever thought of giving to the cock an address of thanks and appreciation. One expects no recognition for acting according to one's nature It is only natural for good men to do good things like telling the truth, loving all creatures, finding no fault in others, and being of service to everyone They cannot live otherwise Do we specially honour a man for eating ? Service to others comes naturally to a *jnani*, just as eating, drinking and sleeping do to ordinary people It is impossible for him to say, "I shall not help" We should take it that the *karma* of such a *jnani* has become *akarma*. This condition has been given the holy status of *akarma* which is *sannyasa* The same state should also be called "*karma-yoga*" Since the *jnani* goes on acting, it is "*yoga*"; but since, even while acting, he doesn't think of it, it is "*sannyasa*" Since, in action he uses a technique (*yukti*) which keeps him from being touched by it, it is *yoga* , and since, even though acting, he does not act, it is "*sannyasa*" (being given over to the eternal goodness)

(19) One aspect of akarma : Yoga

What does *sannyasa* mean, ultimately ? Is it giving up some actions, and doing others? No, the meaning of *san-*

nyasa is "giving up all action." To be free from all action, not to act at all, that is *sannyasa.* But what does "not acting" mean? Action is a curious thing. How can we give up all action? Action is in front of us and behind us, to right and left of us; it spreads all round us in every direction. Why, if we sit down, that too is action. Not only is "to sit" a verb in grammar, but sitting is a physical action. And if we sit still for some time, the legs begin to ache; even sitting still is a strain. When doing nothing itself turns out to be an action, how is it possible to give up action? The Lord revealed to Arjuna his Universal Form. Seeing its vastness, Arjuna became afraid and shut his eyes; even then, the same form appeared within. If we see a thing even when we shut our eyes, how can we escape from it? And how are we to avoid action which goes on even when we are doing nothing?

A certain man had large quantities of valuable gold jewels. He wished to keep them safely locked up in a big box. His servant got a big strong steel box made for him. He looked at it and said, "You idiot! Have you no sense of beauty or fitness? Would anyone keep these priceless jewels in this ugly iron box? Go and get me a good gold box." The servant did as he was told. "A gold box needs a gold lock," said the master. Starting out to hide the gold from others' eyes, he finally succeeded in advertising it. There was no need for the thief to search for the gold. He had only to carry away the box. Thus, not acting becomes a kind of action. How can one give up action which is so all-pervasive?

But there is a way of renouncing action, and that is to devise a method by which, though we do all the actions in the world, they melt and flow away from us. It is only when this becomes possible that we can say that *sannyasa* has been reached. How to perform *karma* and yet make it melt and flow away? Look at the sun. It acts night and day. Even

at night it acts and lights up the other side of the earth. Although it works all the time, no one ever talks of the sun working. That is why, in the Fourth Chapter, the Lord says, "I taught this *yoga* first to Surya (the Sun-God). From him, Manu, the seeker and thinker, learnt it." Though working all the twenty-four hours of the day, the sun does not act. There is no doubt that this condition is truly wonderful.

(20) The other aspect of akarma : Sannyasa

But this is only one form of *sannyasa*. One aspect of this state of *akarma* is that, though the man acts, he does not act. The other aspect is that, though he does not act at all, he moves the whole world to action. There is in him an immeasurable power to impel to action. This is the paradox of *akarma* : it is filled with a power that is capable of infinite action. It is like steam which, when compressed, does enormous work. Steam that is enclosed gains tremendous power, and moves huge ships and long trains. It is the same with the sun which does nothing at all, but works all the twenty-four hours in the day. If asked, the sun would say, "I do nothing at all." One aspect of the sun is that it works day and night and yet does nothing; the other, that while it does nothing, it performs infinite action day and night. These are the two splendid sides of *sannyasa*.

And both are rare. In one aspect, the action is explicit, and the state of *akarma* implicit. In the other, though the state of *akarma* is clearly manifest, yet, because of it, endless activity is continuously going on. In this state, *akarma* is filled to overflowing with action, and thus mighty actions are achieved. There is a world of difference between the man in this state and the idler. The lazy man gets easily tired and depressed. But the *sannyasi*, who does no work, conserves his power. He does not work at all. That is, he does not work with his limbs, or with his mind. But even while he does nothing, he does infinite work.

Supposing someone we have offended is just silent, and does not speak when we go to him How great is the effect of his silence, his "renunciation of speech"! Another man in the same situation splutters out his indignation Both are angry, but while one does not open his mouth, the other bursts out Both are examples of anger Being silent too is only a manifestation of anger And it serves the purpose How terrible it is for a child when its father or mother stops speaking to it! Not speaking, giving up action, is far more effective than any kind of positive action Silence can achieve what speaking cannot. Such is the state of the *jnani* His non-action, his silence, his sitting still, accomplishes much, releases great power for action What action cannot achieve, these men, remaining inactive, accomplish This is the other side of *sannyasa*

In such *sannyasa*, all initiative and all effort come together and rest in one place

> The movement of action has stopped
> And sunk like a sack on the Lord's wings
> All care is over, and faith has come ,
> I dwell no more in the womb
> Not in my own being do I live ;
> The Lord has robbed me of my pride
> Tuka says, "I live in the being of the One
> I am empty and hollow"

Tukaram says, "I am now empty, like a sack All activity is at an end" But in that empty sack there is hidden a mighty energy The sun calls aloud to no one , yet, at his sight, birds fly, lambs frolic, the cows go out to graze in the forest, merchants open their shops, the farmer goes to the field, all the world gets busy. It is enough that the sun exists From it, endless actions take their rise The state of *akarma* is filled with the strength to move to infinite action, it is filled

to the brim with infinite power Such is the other wonderful aspect of *sannyasa*

(21) Who can compare the two ?

In the Fifth Chapter, the two ways of *sannyasa* are compared. One is doing nothing while working twenty-four hours in the day, the other is doing everything while not working even for a moment The one is silence in speech, the other is speech through silence Let us consider these two divine states, and inquire about them, and meditate upon them—there is a rare joy in it

In fact, this whole matter is both rare and exalted. Truly, this idea of *sannyasa* is most holy, most beautiful We can never thank enough whoever it was that first sought and discovered an idea of such shining splendour. This idea of *sannyasa*, one may say, is the highest point reached by man's intellect, his power of thought Beyond this, no man's thought has stretched, to this day. Attempts at higher flights are still going on, but neither in concept nor in experience has anyone surpassed this There is a rare joy in the very contemplation of this *sannyasa* with its two aspects But when we come to the world of speech and action, the joy fails ; we feel that we are falling On this matter, I have thought and talked with my friends for many years, and I have discovered the inadequacy of language to deal with it

It is a noble, delightful, poetical concept this, of doing everything by doing nothing, and doing nothing in doing everything Where else but here could we find poetry ? The famous masterpieces of poetry are insipid beside this No poem can compare with this idea in producing sheer joy, enthusiasm, energy and a sense of the divine Therefore, the Fifth Chapter has been established at a very high level Till the Fourth Chapter, *karma* and *vikarma* were described ; now we are taken on a higher flight Here the two aspects of the state of *akarma* are compared before our eyes. Here-

words stumble Is the *karma-yogi* better, or the *karma-sannyasi* ? Who really does more work ? It is impossible to answer these questions Doing nothing though doing all things, to do all things by doing nothing—both alike are *yoga* , but for the sake of comparison, one is called *yoga*, the other *sannyasa*

(22) Examples from Geometry and Mimamsa

It is so difficult to compare them , how then are we to set about it ? Only through illustrations But when we begin to illustrate, we have the feeling of falling from a height But we have to come down In truth, the idea of absolute *karma-sannyasa* or *karma-yoga* cannot be completely expressed in a living person , they would shatter the human body. We can only use as examples the saints who have approached the ideal Examples are never perfect, but for the time being, one has to assume that they are

We say in Geometry, " Let ABC be a triangle " But why " postulate " this ? Because the lines of the triangle are not real A line, by definition, has length, but no width But how to show on the blackboard this length without width ? Every line we draw to indicate length possesses some width Therefore, in Geometry, we cannot proceed without " postulates " It is the same in *bhakti-sastra* There too the devotee says, " Let the Lord of the Universe be in this small round stone called *salagram* " If anyone exclaims, " What madness is this ?" you could ask him, " Is not your Geometry equally mad ? When I see clearly a thick fat line, you ask me to suppose that it has no width Isn't that madness ? If you look at it through a microscope, it is half an inch thick Just as Geometry wants us to postulate some things, *bhakti* wants us to postulate the presence of God in the *salagram* " If he says, " God won't crack, but your *salagram* will , I shall give it a blow," he is not being clever If you can " postulate " in Geometry, why not in *bhakti*? Imagine a point, we say,

and draw on the board a whole circle But if you start defining a point, it might turn out to be something like defining *brahman* A point has no length, no width, no thickness—nothing, in fact Though we define it thus, we represent it clearly on the blackboard Though it exists, it has no dimensions. The fact is that the true triangle, or the true point, exists only in definition, but we have to proceed on the assumption that they actually exist In *bhakti* too, we have to postulate the existence of the indestructible all-pervading God within the *salagram* We shall now make the comparison with the help of examples which we shall take to be perfect

The *mimamsakas*, the interpreters of the Vedas, have done something delightful In enquiring where God is, they have given a very beautiful explanation Regarding the gods who appear in the Vedas—Indra, Agni and Varuna—these questions arise "What sort of person is this Indra ? What is his form like ? Where does he dwell ?" And the *mimamsaka* answers, "The word 'Indra' is the form of Indra He lives in the word 'Indra' The sounds '*In-dra*' constitute his being This is his figure ; this is his measure" And what about Varuna ? He too is "*Va-ru-na*,"—that is his form We may extend this to Agni and the other gods All the gods are formed out of syllables—this image, this conception, is delightful Our image of a god, the reality called a god, cannot be contained in any form To reveal the mental image, the syllables that make up his name are good enough symbols If asked, "What is God like ?", we answer "*G-O-D*" In the end, "*Om*" has worked wonders It has itself become God It has become a symbol of God It is necessary to invent such symbols, for these vast concepts cannot be enclosed in any image or form, but man's desire is compulsive He persists in attempting to give body to such ideas

(23) The sannyasi and the yogi are one—Witness: Suka and Janaka

Sannyasa and *yoga* are both such high concepts that in their absolute form they cannot be embodied in any human being But though they cannot be contained by the body, they can be comprehended by the mind We have to stop with describing in words what the perfect *yogi* and the perfect *sannyasi* are like They will always remain ideal and inaccessible, but as examples we should take those who have approached the ideal Then, as in Geometry, we should take it that these are perfect *yogis* and perfect *sannyasis*. We illustrate *sannyasa* by Suka and Yajnavalkya As *karma-yogis*, the Gita itself mentions Janaka and Sri Krishna Lokamanya Tilak, in *Gita-Rahasya*, gives a long list, " Janaka, Sri Krishna and others followed this path ; Suka, Yajnavalkya and others followed that path " But thinking a little, one sees that the distinction evaporates as if written with water Yajnavalkya was a *sannyasi*, Janaka was a *karma-yogi* That is, Janaka, the *karma-yogi* was a disciple of Yajnavalkya the *sannyasi* , but Sukadeva the *sannyasi* was the disciple of this same Janaka Suka was the disciple of Janaka, who was the disciple of Yajnavalkya. First the *sannyasi*, then the *karma-yogi*, and then again the *sannyasi*, so the garland is strung. Thus *yoga* and *sannyasa* succeed each other in the same line.

Vyasa said to Suka, " Suka, my son, you have no doubt attained wisdom, but no *guru* has yet set his seal on you Go therefore to Janaka " Sukadeva went Janaka was sitting on the third floor of his great palace Suka was a forest-dweller His eyes drank in the sights of the city as he went along

Janaka asked him, " Why have you come here ?"

Suka answered, " To get knowledge "

" Who sent you ?"

" Vyasadeva "

"Where do you come from ?"
"From the ashram"
"What did you see in the market on the way ?"
"I saw rows upon rows of sweets piled up on all sides"
"And what else did you see ?"
"I saw sugar dolls walking and talking"
"And what else ?"
"For my coming up here, there were solid sugar steps."
"What else did you find ?"
"Here too, I see sugar pictures everywhere"
"What do you see now ?"
"One sugar doll talking to another"

Then Janaka said, "Now you may go You have attained all wisdom"

Suka had secured what he wanted, a signed certificate from Janaka The point is that the *karma-yogi* had accepted as disciple the *sannyasi* Suka Suka no doubt remained a *sannyasi*, but how delightful the situation is !

Parikshit was under a curse—he was to die in seven days. He had to get ready for his death He needed a *guru* who could teach him how to die He sent for Sukacharya, who came and sat cross-legged for 24 × 7 = 168 hours, narrating the *Bhagavata* He did not once change his position, and went on with his story without a break What is wonderful about this is that, though he had to work intensely for seven whole days, he felt no strain. Though he was constantly working, it was as if he did no work at all He had not even a feeling of effort The truth is that *sannyasa* and *karma-yoga* are not two different things

Hence the Lord says,

"*ekam saankhyam cha yogam cha yah pasyati sa pasyati*"

"He truly sees, who sees *sankhya* and *yoga* as one."

He who realises that *sankhya* and *yoga* are one, can be said to have understood the real secret. The one acts while being

inactive, and the other, though he acts, does not feel the effort A real *sannyasi*, one who is in constant *samadhi*, and free from all distorting passion—if we keep one such with us for ten days, what light, what energy, he radiates ! What could not be achieved by repeated efforts through the years, comes easy because we look at him, because he is with us. When the mind is purified by a look at a photograph, when the heart is filled with devotion, love and holiness by looking at the picture of a dead person, what inspiration can we not derive from seeing a live *sannyasi* ? The *sannyasi* and the *yogi* alike bring good to the world In the one case, though it seems as though action has been renounced, this state of renunciation is filled to the brim with action It holds boundless creative power and illumination Both the *sannyasi* and the *karma-yogi* are *jnanis*, seers, and are entitled to the same high throne Though the names are different, the substance is the same They are two modes of the same reality A wheel in rapid motion seems at rest The state of the *sannyasi* is similar From his *santi*, his peace and steadiness, flows infinite power, endless movement Mahavira, Buddha, and Nivrttinatha were such realised souls Though all the endeavours of the *sannyasi* have ceased, and come to a rest, he does mighty deeds. As stone means *pashana* and *pashana* means stone, "*sannyasa*" means "*karma-yoga*" and "*karma-yoga*" means "*sannyasa*"

(24) And yet yoga is to be preferred to sannyasa

Though all this is true, yet the Lord adds a qualification He says that *karma-yoga* is better than *sannyasa* When the two are identical, why should the Lord prefer one ? Is this a joke ? When the Lord says that *karma-yoga* is better, he speaks from the standpoint of the *sadhaka*, the seeker after perfection To do nothing, and yet to do all things, is possible for the *siddha*, the perfected one, not for the *sadhaka*, the seeker. But even he can practise in some measure the

method of doing all things and yet doing nothing. The one rule is impossible for the seeker, it is appropriate only to the *siddha* , but the other is practicable to a certain extent, even for the seeker. Action through inaction is a riddle beyond the understanding of the *sadhaka* *Karma-yoga* is both the way and the goal, but *sannyasa* is only the goal From the point of view of the *sadhaka*, *karma-yoga* is preferable to *sannyasa*.

On the same principle, the Lord, in the Twelfth Chapter, stresses the *saguna* (God with form) rather than the *nirguna* (God without form) The *saguna* engages the mind and the senses, while the *nirguna* does not. The *nirguna* has no use for the devotee's hands, feet or eyes—all his senses remain inactive The *sadhaka* is not able to use them aright for their own fulfilment But in *saguna*, the eyes can see the Lord's form, the ears can hear His praises, the hands can offer worship to Him and serve human beings, the feet can take him on pilgrimage—thus all the organs are assigned appropriate work, and gradually given over to Hari, the Lord. But in *nirguna*, there is a ban on all this—the mouth is shut, the ears are closed, the hands and feet bound. The poor *sadhaka* looks at this state of being bound in and shut up, and is frightened How could *nirguna* find a place in his heart ? If he sat in silence, his mind will soon be filled with a succession of unrelated thoughts. And the nature of the senses is such that they invariably do what they are told not to do Isn't that so in advertisements ? They write, " Don't read this," on top of something and everybody reads it first. You say, " Don't read this," to see that everybody reads it and reads it attentively In *nirguna* the mind wanders Not so in *saguna-bhakti* Here there is *arati* and *puja* (ritual worship), and compassion and service to living beings , here there is work for the senses Once you have engaged the senses in work, you can say to your mind, " Now you can go where you like "

But then the mind wants to go nowhere, it is delighted to stay ; without knowing it, it is one-pointed But if you try consciously to concentrate it on something, it will run away and escape you If you engage the various senses in noble and beautiful tasks, and then give the mind freedom to wander, it would prefer to stay It will say, " I shall stay where I am " But if you order it to sit quiet, it will say, " I'm off "

Because man has a body, *saguna* is easier and therefore better The art of acting and yet not clinging to it is preferable to action through inaction, because it is easier There is room in *karma-yoga* for effort and practice Through *karma-yoga* one can learn to control the senses and, little by little, detach the mind from all activity. And if the method does not succeed today, it is bound to succeed some day Ease in practice distinguishes *karma-yoga* from *sannyasa*, but in the state of perfection, they are the same Though their names are different, and they appear to be two, they are in reality one In one, the demon of *karma* is dancing without, but peace reigns within In the other, though nothing is done, there is a power to shake the three worlds In both cases, the reality is different from the appearance If perfect *karma-yoga* is *sannyasa*, perfect *sannyasa* is *karma-yoga* There is no difference , but for the seeker, *karma-yoga* is easy In the perfect state, both are one

Changadev sent a letter to Jnanadev It was just a piece of blank paper Jnanadev was younger in years, so he could not begin respectfully with "*pujya* .. ". He could not begin with the blessing, " *chiranjivi* ", because Jnanadev was superior in wisdom He could not decide how to begin the letter So Changadev sent off the blank (*kora*) paper It first reached the hands of Nivrttinath He read it and gave it to Jnanadev Jnanadev too read it and gave it to Muktabai. Muktabai read it and said, " Changadev has become so big, but he is still *kora*, hollow " Nivrttinath read another

meaning in it He said, "Changadev is *kora*, innocent, he is pure and taintless and deserves to be taught" And he asked Jnanadev to answer this letter Jnanadev wrote a letter of sixty-five *ovis* (Marathi stanzas). It is still known as "Changadev's Sixty-five" Such is the delightful story of this letter It is easy to read what is written, but very difficult to read what is not written You never come to the end of it. In the same way, though the *sannyasi* seems a hollow reed (*kora*), a blank piece of paper, he is full of illimitable action

In the perfect state, *sannyasa* and *karma-yoga* are of equal worth, but the practical value of *karma-yoga* is higher A currency note for fifty rupees, and a gold coin of the same value, so long as the government is stable, are of equal worth But if there is a Revolution, the note is worth nothing You can always get something in exchange for the gold coin, for it is, after all, gold In the ultimate state, renunciation of *karma* and *karma-yoga* are of equal value, because, in both, there is equal *jnana* (knowledge) and its value is *ananta*, infinite No matter what you add to infinity, the value remains infinite. When *karma-tyaga* and *karma-yoga* are added to perfect *jnana* which is infinity, they become equivalent But once you remove *jnana* from both sides of the equation, *karma-yoga* is more valuable than *karma-tyaga* to the *sadhaka*, the seeker It is only when we add firm, pure *jnana* to both, that they become equal When the goal has been reached, *jnana* + *karma* = *jnana* + *akarma* For the *sadhaka* it is difficult even to understand action through inaction He can understand inaction through action *Karma-yoga* is found both in the path and in the goal, but *sannyasa* only in the goal, and not in the path In the terminology of the *sastras*, *karma-yoga* is both the way and the goal, the *sadhan* and the *nishtha*, but *sannyasa* is only *nishtha* And "*nishtha*" means the ultimate state.

CHAPTER VI

CONTROLLING THE MIND

(25) Keenness for self-development

In the Fifth Chapter, we were able to see, through imagination and enquiry, how high a man can soar *Karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma* together complete *sadhana*, the path *Karma* is gross In all our actions performed as *svadharma*, there should be the accompanying action of the mind The action performed for educating the mind is *vikarma*, which is special *karma*, or subtle *karma*. *Karma* and *vikarma* are both necessary, and as we go on practising both, we lay the foundation of *akarma*. In the last Chapter we saw how, here, *karma* and *sannyasa* become one. In the beginning of the Sixth Chapter, the Lord says again that though the stand of the *karma-yogi* seems different from that of the *sannyasi*, they are quite the same. The difference is only in the way of looking at things The aim of the later chapters is to discover the path to reach the state described in Chapter Five

Many people mistakenly imagine that the spiritual life, and books like the *Gita*, are intended only for ascetics. When a man says, "I am not an ascetic," he seems to imply that ascetics form a species, like horses, lions, bears and cows; and it is further implied that the spiritual life is only intended for that species It is as if all other creatures in the work-a-day world belong to some different species, with thoughts and ways of its own. Such thinking has divided humanity into two kinds of beings, ascetics and worldly men Lokamanya Tilak has drawn our attention to this in his *Gita Rahasya* I wholeheartedly endorse his view that the *Gita* is a scripture intended for ordinary men, living their daily lives in the world The *Bhagavad Gita* is for the whole world. All the spiritual practices are for every man in the world *Paramartha*, the higher knowledge, teaches us how, by keeping our lives pure,

we can attain equilibrium and peace of mind The *Gita* exists to tell us how our lives can be kept pure And so the *Gita* comes to your help wherever you are doing something But it is not content with leaving you just there, it takes you by the hand and leads you right to the goal Don't we know the famous saying, "If the mountain will not come to Muhammad, Muhammad will go to the mountain"? Muhammad wishes that his message should reach even the lifeless mountain Indeed, because the mountain is lifeless, Muhammad would not expect the mountain to walk up to him. The same is true with the *Gita*. It is prepared to go to the lowest, the weakest, the least cultured of men And it goes to him not to keep him where he is, but to grasp him by the hand and lift him up The *Gita* wishes that man should make his actions pure, and attain the highest state. That is why the *Gita* was born

Therefore, don't raise a fence round yourself, saying, "I am stupid, I am an ordinary fellow, wallowing in worldliness" Don't say, "What can I do? My whole being is contained in this six-foot body" And don't raise such boundary walls around yourself and behave like an animal Be bold enough to move forward and climb upward.

> "*Uddharet atmanaatmaanam naatmaanamavasaadayet*"
> "Let a man raise the self by the Self, let him not debase himself"

Have the courage to say, "I shall surely lift myself up" Do not kill the power of your mind, thinking, "I am a worthless worldly creature." Do not clip the wings of imagination; spread them out. Take the *chandul* as your model When it sees the rising sun, it thinks it can reach the sun, and flies towards it We too should be like that However high the poor *chandul* flies, can it ever reach the sun? But through the imagination, it can certainly attain the sun But our behaviour is just the opposite We do not rise even as high

as we can, but instead, we cramp our imagination, weaken our power of growth, and so flutter down to earth. Even the power that is ours, we lose by undervaluing it. When imagination is crippled, one cannot but fall down Let the imagination, therefore, be upward-looking Since man progresses with the help of the imagination, do not throttle it. Don't whine—

> "Brother, do not leave the beaten track ,
> Stay where you are in the world, don't wander here
> and there in vain "

Don't dishonour your soul The seeker can be steady only when he has wide imagination and self-confidence. Only by these can he sustain himself and grow But give up the feeling that *dharma* is intended only for *sadhus* and *sannyasis*, that when you go to *sadhus* and *sannyasis* it is only to get a certificate from them that, situated as you are, you are doing the best you can Do not bind yourself by thinking such self-stultifying thoughts Without noble thoughts and aspiration you cannot advance one step.

If you have this vision, this aspiration, this noble confidence, then it is necessary to alter and adjust the means , else, the whole thing comes to an end To help outward action, the mental process, called *vikarma*, was prescribed To complete *karma*, *vikarma* is constantly necessary We saw, in the Fifth Chapter, the divine state of *akarma* reached with the help of these two, and its varieties. From this Sixth Chapter onwards are described the varieties of *vikarma* The means of inward growth (*sadhana*) is described But before explaining the *sadhana*, the *Gita* says, "Brother Soul, you can become a god Hold on to this divine aspiration Set free the mind, and strengthen its wings" Of this *sadhana* or *vikarma*, there are many kinds, like *bhakti-yoga* (devotion), *dhyana* (meditation), *jnana-vijnana* (enquiry and analysis),

guna-vikasa (the development of the personality), and *atma-anatma-viveka* (discrimination between the Self and non-Self).

In the Sixth Chapter is described the kind of *sadhana* called *dhyana-yoga* (the way of meditation)

(26) One-pointedness of mind

There are three important things in *dhyana-yoga* (the way of meditation), namely (1) one-pointedness of mind, (2) setting bounds to one's life, to help achieve this, and (3) a state of equanimity or evenness of vision Without these, no true progress is possible One-pointedness of mind means controlling its movements Setting bounds to one's life means doing actions after weighing and measuring them Evenness of vision means having the nobility to think in terms of the whole world These three together make up *dhyana-yoga*. To achieve these three, one needs the help of *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (detachment) Let us now consider these five

First, one-pointedness of mind Whatever one may be doing, the mind should concentrate on it Even in worldly affairs, such concentration is essential. It is not as if the qualities needed for worldly success are different from those needed for spiritual progress The attempt to purify one's daily activities is spiritual life Whatever one does, trade or research or politics, its success or failure depends on one's concentration on it. It is said of Napoleon that, after completing his arrangements for battle, he would lose himself in mathematical theories right on the field Amidst showers of bullets, and dying soldiers, Napoleon's mind was absorbed in mathematics Not that I say that Napoleon's concentration was of the highest We know examples of higher kinds of concentration, but I wanted you to see how great his concentration was Of Caliph Omar too it is said that in the midst of a battle, when it was time for *namaz*, he would draw in his thoughts and, kneeling in the battle-field, would begin to pray , his concentration was such that he did not

even know whose men were mowed down If Islam spread far and wide, it was because of the devotion to God and one-pointedness of the early Mussalmans

The other day I heard a story There was a fakir An arrow had entered his body The pain was unbearable But any attempt to pull the arrow out would make it worse They didn't know of chloroform or other anaesthetics in those days. It was a difficult situation Some people who knew him came forward and said, " Don't try to pull out the arrow now It will be easy to do so when he is at prayer " The time came for *namaz* The fakir settled down to pray In a moment his mind became one-pointed, and he did not know that the arrow was pulled out

Look at the power of concentration !

The idea is that, whether in worldly or in spiritual matters, success is hard to come by without one-pointedness of mind If the mind is concentrated, one will never lack ability Even if you are an old man of sixty, you will have the enthusiasm and energy of a youth As one grows older, one's mind should get stronger Look at a fruit It is green at first, then it ripens and shrinks and falls off, but all this time, the seed within gets stronger The outer body will wither, will fall, but that is not the essential part of the fruit The essential part, the soul, is the seed It is the same with our bodies. Even as the body grows older, memory should grow stronger, and knowledge brighter But this rarely happens. One says, " My memory is getting weaker these days " " Why ?" " Age is growing on me " Your wisdom, learning, memory—these are the seed As the body becomes infirm with age, the soul grows correspondingly stronger But this is impossible without one-pointedness

(27) How to achieve one-pointedness

One-pointedness is of course necessary, but how does one come by it ? What should one do in order to get it ? The

Lord says one should fix the mind in the Self and "think of nothing else" (*na kinchidapi chintayet*).

But then, how is this to be done? To make the mind perfectly calm is a great thing. Unless one stops with force the revolving wheel of thoughts, how can one attain one-pointedness? Even if the outer wheel is somehow stopped, the inner wheel will go on revolving. As we, more and more, use external means to concentrate the mind, the inner wheels revolve all the faster You may cross your legs, sit straight, and fix your gaze But the mind won't become one-pointed because of this The important thing is to be able to still the wheels of the mind.

The fact of the matter is, concentration is impossible, unless we keep within banks the *samsara* which fills and overflows our minds and the outer world. We should not, as we do now, expend the soul's boundless power of knowledge on trivial, external objects Just as the man who has made his wealth not by robbing others, but by hard work, would not squander it, even so, we should not waste our power of knowledge by thinking of trivial things Discrimination is a priceless treasure, and yet we spend it on gross matters "This vegetable is not well-cooked; it needs more salt" What if it lacks a pinch of salt, brother? So much thought is spent on this great matter! We teach children within the four walls of the schoolroom, because, under the trees, they would be distracted by crows and sparrows and would not be able to concentrate their minds They are only children. So long as they do not see the birds, they concentrate their minds We have grown big like horses We have even got horns Therefore, even if we are enclosed in a seven-walled city, our minds wander, for we go on discussing all the trifling little things in the world The power of thought which can lead us to God, we are content to employ in talk of the taste of vegetables

This fearful *samsara* is raging day and night all round us, within and without. Even in our prayer, the motive is outward benefit We don't think of union with God, forgetting *samsara* for a moment. Even prayer is a mere show When the mind is in this state, assuming a posture and shutting one's eyes are all in vain. Because the mind is forever running abroad, man's whole strength is lost There is no kind of discipline or control in him We see this at every step in our country Indeed, our land is a dwelling place of the spirit Our people are looked upon as having already wings with which to fly in the upper air In such a land, what is my state and yours ? One is pained to see so much anxiety and so much discussion devoted to silly little matters Our minds are immersed in triviality

> " Sacred stories send us to sleep ,
> Care keeps us awake in bed
> Obscure is the way of *karma* ,
> Why weep ? "

The mind is fixed on nothing, or on too many things. Nowhere do we see one-pointedness. What a slave to the senses is man ! Once, someone asked, " Why is it said that the eyes should be half-open and half-shut ? " I said, " The answer is easy If you shut the eyes completely, you fall asleep If you keep them fully open, they turn on all sides and prevent concentration The sleep that comes to closed eyes is *tamas*. The manifold activity of wide-open eyes is *rajas* Therefore the intermediate state is prescribed."

It means that, till the mind changes, no concentration is possible The state of the mind should be pure, and this can't be achieved by assuming an erect posture All our activity should be pure To purify activity, its motive should be transformed Activity should not be pursued for one's individual profit, for satisfying the instincts, or for outward objects.

All day long we are engaged in activities What is the purpose of this day-long labour ?

" The purpose of all my effort
Is to make my last day sweet "

All this running about, this endless effort and toil, is it not because we want our final day on earth to be happy ? All the bitter sufferings of our life, what are they for ? To make the last moment, the moment of death, holy. Evening comes at end of day If we have done all the work of the day with a pure heart, the evening prayer is sweet If the last moment of the day is sweet, the day's work has found its reward Then the mind easily becomes one-pointed

For concentration, such purity of life is essential Thought of outward objects should be avoided Man's life is not long, but he has the power, even in this brief life, to taste the bliss of God Two men may appear to be cast in the same mould—two eyes, a nose in between and two nostrils Thus the two men are similar, and yet one is like a god, the other a beast. Why so ? Both are children of the same God—" all pots of the same clay "—but why this difference ? One can hardly believe they belong to the same species While one is a God in human form, the other is a monkey !

Both in past ages and amongst us today, there have been men who know what heights man can rise to This is a matter of experience Now as in the past, there have been men to show what power there is in the human body If man can achieve such miracles dwelling in the body, why then can I not ? Why should I set limits to my imagination ? I too have the same human body with which others have become heroes of humanity , so why should I be in this plight ? I am making some mistake My mind is always roaming abroad It is so busy judging others But where is the need for me to judge others ?

"Why look at the good and bad in others,
Are my own faults few?"

If I am always absorbed in observing tiny little things in others, how can my mind become one-pointed? In this condition, I can only be one of two things, asleep (in a state of nothingness) or distracted (at many points) I am caught in *tamas* or *rajas*

It is true that the Lord tells us how to sit, how to direct the eyes and so on, to make the mind one-pointed But it is only when we have first realised the need for one-pointedness, that these have value Once a man is firmly convinced of the indispensability of one-pointedness, then he will seek and find for himself the means to attain it

(28) Living within bounds

Another aid to concentration is to set bounds to one's life All our actions must be measured and weighed Precision, the secret of mathematics, should be found in all our actions As we measure out each dose of medicine before taking it, our sleep and food too should be in measure This should be so everywhere in our life All our senses should be under strict watch, to see that we do not sleep too much, or eat too much, or even look at too many things

One gentleman said of another, "When he enters a room, he notes in a second what things are kept in it, and where" I prayed within myself, "Lord, may I never have this power!" Am I his secretary, or am I a thief, that I should compile and keep in my head an inventory of his possessions? How does it concern me where he keeps his soap or his watch? Of what use is this knowledge to me? We should stop employing our eyes thus uselessly And we should restrain our ears as well Some people seem to think that it would be wonderful to have ears like a dog's Then they could turn in any direction we want It is certainly a defect that our ears are fixed like this But we don't need this useless power As

it is, the mind is far too busy The slightest noise, the slightest disturbance, and our minds are drawn to it Therefore I say, establish order and discipline in your life. Let us not look at bad things, or read bad books. Let us not listen to ironical praise of others Let us turn away not only from bad things, but also from innocent things beyond measure Avoid greed of all kinds Of course we should never have wine or pakoras or rasagullas, but even of bananas or oranges, we can have too many Fruit is of course pure food, but even of that one can have too much The master within will not tolerate the licence of the tongue The senses should realise that the Lord within would surely punish them if they did what they liked Disciplined conduct is called setting bounds to life

(29) Friendly outlook

The third thing is a balanced outlook, which is the same thing as a friendly outlook Without this, the mind cannot become one-pointed The lion is the mighty king of the forest and yet he does not take four steps forward without looking behind How can the lion, that lives by violence, attain concentration of mind ? The eyes of the lion, the crow and the cat constantly rove about Their look shows fear and suspicion Such is the state of animals that are violent But we should develop a sense of equality All creation should appear to us auspicious and friendly I should trust all creatures as I trust myself What have we to fear ? All things are pure, all things holy

visvam tat bhadram yadavanti devaah

This Universe is auspicious, full of goodness, because God looks after it As Browning says,

"God's in his heaven——
All's right with the world !"

Nothing is wrong in this world If there is anything wrong, it is in my vision As is my vision, so is the world If I wear red glasses, the world too would appear red and aflame

Ramdas, as he wrote his *Ramayan*, read it out to his students. Unknown to anyone, Hanuman too would come and sit among them, and listen to it. Samarth Ramdas had written, "Hanuman reached the *asoka*-grove, and he saw the white flowers there." Hearing this, Hanuman appeared suddenly and said, "I saw no white flowers; the flowers I saw were red. What you have written is wrong. Correct it." Samarth insisted, "I have written right. The flowers you saw were white." Hanuman would not yield; he said, "It was I that went there. Would I tell a lie?" The dispute was at last taken to Sri Ramachandra. "The flowers were of course white," he said, "but Hanuman's eyes were red with anger, and saw the pure white as red." The point of this charming story is that what the world appears to us to be depends on the vision we take to it.

So long as we do not feel sure that the whole creation is auspicious, the mind will not be one-pointed. As long as we think that something is wrong with the world, we look at all things with suspicion. Poets sing of the happy freedom of birds, but let them try being a bird for a while. Then they would know what a bird's freedom is really worth. The neck of a bird dances back and forth all the time. It is ever afraid of others. If you put your bird on the seat of meditation, will it attain one-pointedness? If we approach it, it would fly away at once, afraid that we mean to kill it. Those whose minds are filled with the fearful idea that the whole world destroys and devours, what can they know of peace? So long as the thought that I alone defend myself, and all others are devourers, does not leave the mind, there can be no one-pointedness. For this, the best means is the *bhavana*, the attitude, of equality. Once you start seeing friendliness everywhere, the mind will, of itself, attain peace.

Take an unhappy man to the banks of a clear running river. At the sight of the pure, calm, flowing water, he ceases to be

restless, he forgets his troubles Whence did this moving water gain such power ? The benign power of God is manifested through this The Vedas are full of beautiful descriptions of streams—

"*atishthantinam anivesanaanaam*"—

Such are these streams The stream flows without a break, it has no resting-place, no home of its own, it is a *sannyasi* Such a pure stream calms my mind in a moment. When I look at such a lovely stream, will not a spring of love and wisdom well up in my heart ?

If this lifeless water without can confer such serenity on my mind, how much deeper the peace if, in the valley of the mind, there should spring up the living stream of *bhakti* and *jnana* !

Once a friend of mine was wandering in Kashmir, among the Himalayas He used to write to me describing the holy mountains and lovely streams there I replied to him, "These streams and mountain ranges and sweet air that give you peerless joy, I can experience them all in my heart I behold these lovely sights constantly in the world within That is why, though you invite me, I shall not leave behind the bliss of this divine Himalaya"

"*sthaavaraanaam himaalayah*"

The Lord declared, "Among mountains I am Himalaya" One worships the Himalaya, the symbol of steadfastness, in order to attain steadfastness. And if on hearing its description, I deserted my post of duty, what would I gain ?

The meaning of it all is that we should calm the mind a little If one looks at the world with friendly eyes, a perennial stream will spring in the heart, divine stars will shine in the inner firmament When the mind gains peace from the sight of sacred objects made of stone and clay, will it not do so while contemplating the sights of the world within the heart ?

Once, during a visit to Trivandrum, I was sitting on the beach.

The boundless sea, its majestic roaring and the evening hour quietened my mind, and I sat still My friend brought me some fruit to eat But at that time, even this *sattvik*, this innocent food, was like poison to me The roaring " Om, Om " of the sea reminded me of the phrase from the Gita " *maamanusmara yuddhya cha*," " Remember me and fight on " The sea was constantly remembering and naming the Lord, and at the same time doing its work A wave came forward , it went back, and then another The sea had not a moment's rest At sight of this, my hunger and thirst disappeared When you come to think of it, what is there in the sea ? If the sight of the salt sea waves rising and falling could make my heart rejoice, how would I dance with joy when the unfathomable ocean of my heart throws up waves of wisdom and love ! The waves of this ocean were beating in the heart of the Vedic seer—

" *antah samudre hrdi antaraayushi*
ghritasya dhaaraa abhichaakasiimi
samudraa uurmir madhumaan udaarat "

The commentators have found it difficult to explain this divine language What are these streams of ghee and honey rising within the heart ? Will waves of brine rise in the ocean of my heart ? No, no In the ocean of my heart, waves of milk, honey, ghee, are beating

(30) Child-preceptor

Learn to behold this ocean of the heart Look up at the cloudless sky outside and make the heart clear and pure. To tell the truth, one-pointedness of mind is child's play, an ordinary thing It is distraction of mind that is unnatural, artificial Look steadily into the eyes of a little child While it looks at you intently, you have blinked a dozen times Children's minds become easily one-pointed Show a little child, four or five months old, the rich greenness of Nature without It will gaze intently on it Mothers think that,

if a child looks at green trees and plants, even its motions are green. It is as if all its senses are in its eyes when it looks through them Any little incident makes a powerful impression on the child's mind. Educationists regard the first three or four years of a child's education as the really effective part of education. No matter how many Universities, or High Schools or Cultural Associations you establish, one never gets again what one had in the first few years. I have had something to do with education Day by day, my conviction becomes stronger that the effect of this formal education is just nothing The impressions formed in the earliest years are set as in hard cement. Later education is like superficial plastering or the colour-wash outside By using soap and water, you can wash off dirt from the body, but how to wash off the colour of one's skin ? Thus the first impressions are hard to remove.

How is it that the first impressions are so strong, and the later ones weak ? It is because in childhood one-pointedness of mind comes naturally Because of this one-pointedness of mind, impressions then received are indelible. Such is the power of one-pointedness. There is nothing impossible for those who have it.

To-day our whole life has become artificial. Our childhood is lost to us. There is no richness, no real joy in life ; it has dried up We act waywardly, capriciously It is not Darwin but we ourselves that prove by our actions that the ape is our ancestor

The little child is trustful Its mother's word is its authority. It never occurs to it to question the truth of the stories it hears "The crow said, " "The sparrow said,"—all this sounds true to the child Because of this innocence and friendliness, the child becomes easily one-pointed

(31) Practice, detachment, faith

For *dhyana-yoga* (the way of meditation), it is thus seen that one-pointedness of mind, disciplined living and a friendly and balanced outlook are necessary. Besides these, two other aids, detachment and practice, are mentioned. The first is negative and destructive, the other, positive and constructive. To remove and throw away the weeds in the field is destructive work—this is *vairagya*, detachment. To sow seeds in the field is constructive work To think good thoughts again and again is *abhyasa*, practice. *Vairagya* is negative, *abhyasa* is positive work. How to acquire *vairagya* ? The mango, we say, is sweet. But is this sweetness only in the fruit ? No, it is not in the fruit alone. We pour the sweetness of the Self into objects, and then they taste sweet. Therefore, learn to taste the sweetness within. The sweetness of external objects is not in themselves. But the sweetness of all sweet things, "*rasaanaam rasatamah,*" the sea of this sweetness, is the Self within me As I go on meditating that all sweet objects gain their sweetness from the Self, *vairagya* fills the mind. Mother Sita gave a pearl necklace to Hanuman. Hanuman, pulling out the pearls, bit them one by one, tasted each and threw it away. In none of them could he find Rama Rama was in his heart. For these same pearls, people give even lakhs of rupees!

In describing *dhyana-yoga*, the Lord has taught us an important lesson at the very beginning. And that is, that one should make a firm resolve, "I have to raise myself by my own effort But I shall rise, I shall reach the heavens. I shall not lie helpless in this human body I shall dare to approach God, and make all the effort needed for it."

Listening to all this, Arjuna had a doubt. He said, "My days are over, Lord. If in a short while I die, what is the use of all this *sadhana*, this practice ?" The Lord replied, "Death is only a long sleep " Every day, after working hard, we sleep

seven or eight hours. Is anyone afraid of this sleep ? We worry only when we do not get sleep Like sleep, death too is necessary. Just as we wake up from sleep and resume our work, our former *sadhana* will avail us even after death. Jnanadev in his *Jnanesvari* has written some verses in this context which seem to reveal his own inner life.

" All knowledge came of itself in childhood, all the *sastras* sprang into speech of their own accord."

These lines show how the *abhyasa* of a former birth draws you The minds of some are not drawn to the objects of sense. They do not know what *moha*, delusion, is For, they have, in a former birth, completed their *sadhana*, their preparation The Lord gives the assurance, " One who treads the path of righteousness, my son, will never come to grief " His effort will not be wasted. We are given this faith at the end of the Chapter What is imperfect shall be made perfect. Accept this teaching of the Lord and make your life fruitful.

CHAPTER VII

PRAPATTI, OR SURRENDER TO GOD

(32) The sublime vision of bhakti

Brothers, when Arjuna faced the problem of maintaining his *svadharma*, his mind was perplexed by the illusion of "mine" and "not mine," and he began to seek ways to escape his *svadharma* This futile illusion of his was shown in the First Chapter. The Second Chapter set out to remove this illusion That the soul is indestructible and all-pervading, that the body is transient, and that one should never give up one's *svadharma*—these three principles were stated there The method of realising these principles was also taught , this technique is the renunciation of the fruits of action In explaining this *karma-yoga*, three things—*karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma*—emerged In the Fifth Chapter, we saw the two aspects of *akarma* produced by the union of *karma* and *vikarma* From the Sixth Chapter onwards, the varieties of *vikarma* are described In the Sixth Chapter was explained the importance of one-pointedness for the *sadhaka*, the seeker

Today we deal with the Seventh Chapter This Chapter, one might say, opens out a beautiful new mansion of *vikarma*. As one reads the *Gita*, one gets the impression of being in the temple of Nature, of walking through a mighty forest, seeing many beautiful sights In the Sixth Chapter we dwelt in the mansion of one-pointedness , now we shall enter another mansion

Before throwing open the doors of this mansion, the Lord makes us understand the secret of the structure of this enticing world. On the same kind of paper and with the same brush, an artist paints a variety of pictures. The *vina*-player, out of seven notes, makes so many different *ragas* With the few letters in the alphabet, we express an endless variety of

thoughts and feelings. Look on this creation too in the same light. There are in it innumerable objects, and many modes of being. But all this exterior and interior creation is made up of two things—the indivisible *atman* and the eightfold forms of Nature. The anger of the angry man, the love of the lover, the agony of the sufferer, the happiness of the happy one, the drowsiness of the idler, the activity of the worker—all these are the play of the same power of *chaitanya*, Intelligence. At the root of all these contradictory movements, and filling them all, is a single Intelligence. As the Intelligence within is one, so too is the outer veil single in its nature. The Lord tells us in the beginning that all creation is born of conscious *atman* and inert Nature

While everywhere spirit and body, the supernatural and the natural, are thus one, why is man caught in illusion? Why does he see difference? While the face of the loving man is pleasant to look at, the sight of another fills us with disgust. Why are we attracted by one and repelled by the other? The same pencil, the same paper, the same artist, and yet the various pictures reveal various kinds of emotion The skill of the artist lies precisely here There is a skill in the fingers of the painter or the *vina*-player that makes us laugh and cry. All the magic is in the fingers of the artist.

This man is near to me, the other distant; this is mine, that is his—such thoughts arise in our minds, and on occasion deflect us from our duty, all because of illusion If we are to escape this illusion, we should learn the secret of the creative skill of the Lord's fingers. The *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* gives the drum (*dundubhi*) as an example The same drum gives out many kinds of sound. Some frighten me, others make me dance. If I am to master all these emotions, I have to catch hold of the drummer Once he is in our hands, all the notes too are in our hands. In one word the Lord says, "Those who wish to cross *maya*, let them take refuge in me."

"Only those who are surrendered to me will escape the play of *maya*, for them, the waters of *maya* dry up here and now"

What then is this that we call "*maya*"? The power of God, His art, the skill of His hand—this is what we call *maya*. *Maya* is nothing but the power of the art of the Creator who out of *atman* and *prakriti* (Spirit and Nature),—or, in Jain terminology, *jiva* and *ajiva* (the living and the non-living)—out of these materials, formed this many-coloured world. Just as in the jail out of the same grain they make bread as well as the *dal* that tastes of everything, in the same way, out of the indivisible spirit and the eightfold body, the Lord creates an endless variety of things. Seeing this, we experience many contradictory emotions of good and bad. If we wish to transcend these diversities and attain true peace, we should try and catch hold of the maker of them all, and become friends with him. It is only when we come to know him that we can escape the illusion which causes diversity and desire.

In the Seventh Chapter, the Lord has thrown open the beautiful mansion of *bhakti*, the powerful *vikarma*, the effective means, for knowing Him. To attain purity of mind many *vikarmas* are prescribed, like *yajna* and *dana* (sacrifice and gifts), *japa* and *tapas* (prayer and penance), *dhyana* and *dharana* (meditation and concentration). These means I should compare with washing soda and soap. But *bhakti* is the water. Without water these other things are useless; but even without these, water can cleanse. If we had them too, it would be as if sugar fell into milk by accident. If in *yajna*, *yaga*, *dhyana* and *tapas* the heart does not enter, how can purity of mind result? It is the involvement of the heart that is *bhakti*.

Bhakti is essential to all kinds of effort. It is the universal method. If a trained nurse, attending on a patient, has not

the *bhavana*, the mental attitude of service, how could it be true service? If a bullock is strong, but is not inclined to draw the cart, he will hang his head and lie down, or even overturn it in a ditch In work without heart, there is neither strength nor satisfaction

(33) Pure joy through bhakti

If we have *bhakti*, we can see the skill of the great artist, the brush in his hand If once we taste the rare sweetness of the stream at its source, all other pleasures become flat and insipid A man who has tasted real bananas would not be taken in by bananas of painted wood or clay, however beautiful A man who tasted the sweetness of a mountain stream would not care for syrups

Once, some people said to a philosopher, "There is a festival of lamps in the city today. Let us go and see it" He replied, "What, after all, is this festival of lights? One lamp, then another, then a third, and so on, a lakh, a million, a crore—as many as you please And that is your festival" In an arithmetical progression like 1 + 2 + 3 . going on to infinity, once we know the difference between one term and the next in the series, there is no need to write it all down These lamps are arranged one after the other; what is there in it to get so excited about? But then, man likes this sort of pleasure He squeezes a lemon, and mixes sugar and water with the juice, sips it and smacks his lips and exclaims, "How delightful this drink is!" What else has the tongue to do, except to taste? We blend all sorts of tastes—and its whole pleasure is in tasting them When I was a boy, I once went to the cinema I took with me a piece of sacking in case I wanted to sleep On the screen appeared dazzling pictures of fire, which in a few minutes tired my eyes out I went to sleep, asking my neighbour to wake me up when the show was over Instead of going out into the open air at night, and looking up at the moon and

the stars in the sky, and enjoying the holy peace of Nature, why do people get cooped up in threatres and watch and applaud the dance of these fiery figures? I never could understand this

Why is man so joyless? The poor fellow finds some sort of pleasure in these lifeless figures When there is no joy in life, people go in for such artificial amusements Once I heard drums beating in the neighbourhood. I enquired what it was for and was told that a child had been born. What is there so special about your having a child that you should announce it to the world with beat of drums? Is it not childish to celebrate a child-birth with all this dancing and singing and mirth? It is as if the world is famished for joy Just as in a famine people rush in a frenzy at the sight of grain, so we, hungry for joy, make a lot of fuss when a child or a cinema or a circus arrives

Is this true joy? Waves of music enter the ear and impinge on the mind; forms impinge on the mind through the eyes For these poor folk, all pleasure consists in these impacts While one man sniffs in powdered tobacco, another rolls it into a *beedi* and inserts it into his mouth. And when the snuff or the smoke hits them they feel they have a cart-load of pleasure Their joy knows no bounds when they pick up a cigarette end Tolstoy says, "A man might even commit murder under the influence of cigarettes" It is a kind of intoxication

Why does man lose himself in such pleasures? Because he does not know where his true joy lies Man is beguiled by shadows Now he derives his pleasure only from his five senses If he did not have the sense of sight, he would imagine that the world offers only four kinds of pleasures If tomorrow a man came down from Mars with six senses, these poor people with only five would cry in sorrow, "Compared to him, how despicable we are!"

How can the full meaning of the universe be apprehended by these five senses? Even among the objects of these five senses, man chooses only a few, and is lost in them. When the donkey's braying reaches his ear, he says in disgust, "What an inauspicious noise!" But is not the sight of you inauspicious to the donkey? If it hurts you, do you never hurt others, even granting that the braying of the donkey is inauspicious? When I was studying in Baroda College, some celebrated European musicians visited the College. No doubt they sang marvellously, but since I was not used to that kind of singing, I sat there wondering when I could escape this infliction. I decided that they did not deserve to pass. And when our singers go abroad, they too would perhaps be esteemed in this fashion. Some find joy in music, others don't. Which means that this is not true joy, but illusory. Until we experience true joy, we shall toss up and down on these deceptive pleasures. Till Asvatthama tasted genuine milk, he was satisfied with flour mixed in water. Once we have seen the true nature of the universe, and tasted its joy, we shall find these other pleasures insipid.

The best way to discover this joy is *bhakti*. As we go along this path, we shall discover the skill of the Lord. When we reach this divine image, all other images disappear of themselves. Then you will not be attracted by anything trivial. Then you will see that the whole world is filled with pure joy. Though there are hundreds of sweetmeat shops, they are filled with the same sweets. Until the real thing comes to our hands, we are like restless birds pecking at this and that. I was reading the *Tulasi-Ramayan* in the morning. There was a cloud of moths surrounding the lamp. Just then, a lizard appeared. What interest had it in the *Ramayan*? But the sight of the moths was sheer joy. As it was about to pounce on the insects, I moved my hand, and it ran away. Even then its attention was concentrated

on the moths I thought within myself, "Would you eat these insects? Does your mouth water at the sight of them?" No, my mouth did not water. What could the poor lizard know of the joy that I was experiencing? It could not taste the sweetness of the *Ramayan* Our condition is not very different from that of the lizard. We are intoxicated by a multitude of enjoyments But when we find true joy, how sweet it would taste! The Lord has shown us the way of *bhakti*, through this we can reach and taste the true joy.

(34) Even bhakti born of desire has value

The Lord speaks of three kinds of devotee (*bhakta*)—(1) *sakama bhakta*, one who prays for something, (2) the disinterested but partial *bhakta*, and (3) the *jnani*, the seer, or the perfect *bhakta* The disinterested but partial *bhakta* is of three kinds,—(1) the afflicted, (2) the seeker after knowledge and (3) the seeker of meaning and purpose. These are the branches and twigs of the tree of *bhakti*.

What is meant by *sakama bhakti*, interested *bhakti*? It is approaching the Lord with some desire in the heart I do not despise this as a low form of *bhakti* Many people render public service for name and fame What is wrong in that? Give them honour; you will do no harm by it. Because they receive honour they will get confirmed in service, and then they will begin to find joy in their work This desire for recognition, what does it mean ultimately? Through recognition, one gets the faith that what one is doing is right One who has no inward means of deciding whether his service is good or bad, such a one accepts this external test When the mother pats the child on the back and says, "Well done, my child!", the child wants to help all the more. The *sakama bhakta* too is like that He could go straight to the Lord, and say, "Give," asking for what he

wants. The habit of going to the Lord and asking Him for whatever one wants is not common It is something rare

Jnanadev asked Namadev, "Will you go with me on a pilgrimage?" Namadev said, "But why?" Jnanadev answered, "We shall meet saints and good men" Namadev said, "Then I shall ask the Lord and come." Namadev went to the temple and stood before the Lord. Tears flowed from his eyes His eyes were fixed on the feet of the Lord At last, he asked, sobbing, "Lord, am I to go?" Jnanadev stood by his side all the time. Would you call Namadev a mad man? There are lots of people who cry because their wives are away But the *bhakta* who goes to the Lord and weeps, even if it is only because he wants something, is rare That he does not demand what he ought to demand, this only shows his ignorance, but just because of this, it would be wrong to regard his interested *bhakti* as something unworthy and to be rejected

Women get up early in the morning and perform a number of rites, they light lamps, go round the *tulasi* plant and so on What for? So that after death they can get the grace of God. This faith may be simple, but for its sake they observe prayer and fasting and other vows Among people who live such devoted lives, great souls are born Ramatirtha was born in the line of Tulasidas He was a scholar in the Persian language Some one told him, "How is it that you, born in the line of Tulasidas, don't know Sanskrit?" This went straight to his heart. Such is the effect of remembering one's ancestry! Impelled by it, he took up the serious study of Sanskrit We should not make light of the piety of women Where these little drops of piety gather, illustrious children are born Therefore the Lord says, "I confirm the devotion even of the interested *bhakta* I will not confuse him If he prays with true heart that his illness should go, I will confirm his will to health, and cure him of his illness.

No matter with what motive he comes to me, I will welcome him with love." Think of Dhruva. When he was refused a place in his father's lap, his mother told him, "Ask the Lord for a place." Dhruva was absorbed in prayer, and the Lord gave him a fixed abode. (He is the Pole Star.) Even if the mind is not desireless, does it matter? The important thing is whom one approaches, from whom one begs. There is greatness in begging from the Lord rather than from the world.

Whatever the excuse, enter the temple of *bhakti*. Though in the beginning you enter it with a motive, you will later become disinterested. Those who conduct khadi exhibitions plead with people, "Do come in and take a look. Look at the fine texture, the bright colours, the beautiful patterns." Once they come in, they are converted. *Bhakti* too is like that. Once you enter its temple, you will discover its beauty and power for yourself.

When Dharmaputra reached at last the gates of heaven, there was only a dog with him. Bhima, Arjuna and the others had fallen by the wayside. He was told, "You can come in, but the dog is not allowed to enter." Dharma answered, "If my dog cannot enter, neither will I." One who performs devoted service, even if it is only a dog, is superior to those who are always thinking of themselves. The dog proved its superiority even to Bhima and Arjuna. Even a worm that moves towards God is greater than the greatest of men who have not turned towards Him. In the temple there are images of the tortoise and the bull, and everyone bows before the bull. Why? Because it is not an ordinary bull, because it stays before the Lord. Even if it is a bull, we cannot forget that it is the Lord's bull. It is greater than the wisest of men. Even a dull creature, if it thinks of the Lord, earns the reverence of the universe.

I was once travelling in a train. It was passing over a bridge across the Jumna A passenger sitting next to me flung with great enthusiasm a coin into the river. There was a rationalist in the compartment who observed, "The country is poverty-stricken, and on top of that, there are people who throw coins out of carriage windows" "You have not understood why he does it," I said "The *bhavana*, the mental attitude with which he threw the coin, is worth at least two or three such coins, is it not? If the money had been given for some good cause, it would no doubt have been better We shall think about it later. But then, he was moved to do this because of the feeling that this is not a mere river, but the Lord's compassion flowing before us Is there any room for this feeling in your Economics? When his eyes saw one of his country's rivers, his heart melted If you can assess in terms of money the value of this feeling, then I shall know how to estimate your patriotism." Does love of country mean mere bread? If on seeing one of the great rivers of one's country, the idea awakes in one's mind that one should immerse all one's possessions in it, and dedicate them to it, how great is that love! All that wealth, those discs of gold and silver, the pearls excreted by the oyster, the hardened coal which we call diamonds—they are indeed worthy of being thrown into the waters Regard them as dust at the feet of the Lord You may wonder what is the connection between a river and the feet of the Lord. In your creation, has the Lord a place? The river is a combination of oxygen and hydrogen The sun is a big kind of gas-lamp Why worship these? One should therefore bow low before this loaf of bread But what is there even in this loaf of bread? Even that, if you go into it, is a kind of white earth Why does your mouth water at the sight of it? Here is the big bright sun just risen, here is the beautiful river flowing past—if you do not see God in them, where can you see Him? Wordsworth laments,—

"The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The sunshine is a glorious birth,
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth"

He says with great sorrow, "My heart used to leap up when I beheld a rainbow in the sky, it used to dance with the daffodils; but why does it dance no more? Have I lost the sweetness of life and become a stone?"

The truth is that even selfish *bhakti*, even superstitious reverence, has high value. In the end, a great power will spring from them. No matter what sort of a person one is, if one goes once into the presence of the Lord, one becomes worthy of honour. No matter what sort of wood is thrown into the fire, it will burn. Devotion to the Lord, *bhakti*, is a wonderful means for attaining Him. He rejoices even in the devotion that is accompanied by desire. In due course, such *bhakti* becomes desireless and tends towards perfection.

(35) Disinterested bhakti—*its varieties and fullness*

We have seen the *sakama bhakta*, the devotee with a motive. We now turn to the *nishkama bhakta*, the disinterested *bhakta*. Even of this *bhakti* there are two kinds—the partial and the whole. Of the partial devotees again, there are three kinds.

The first is the afflicted devotee. They seek the compassion of the Lord, sobbing and crying and restless for Him, like Namadev. They are eager, sorrow-stricken, desperate, and agitated, thinking, "When shall I taste the nectar of the Lord's love, when shall I embrace Him and fulfil my life's purpose, when shall I throw myself at His feet and be one of the blessed?" They look in every action for truth, sincerity, yearning and love.

The second kind are the seekers of wisdom There are not many such in our country today Such a devotee of truth would attempt again and again to climb Gaurisankar and perish in the attempt , he would go in search of the North Pole and after writing down his discoveries on a piece of paper, and sealing it in a bottle which he leaves floating on the waters, he dies , he would descend into the womb of a volcano We Indians today are terribly afraid of death We have no higher ideal in life than looking after our family In the seeker after wisdom, there is an irrepressible hunger for knowledge, an eagerness to know the truth He will investigate the nature and qualities of everything As one by following the river comes at last to the sea, the seeker after knowledge reaches the Lord.

The third kind of *bhakta* seeks meaning and purpose (*artha*), in all things "*Artha*" here does not mean money or wealth, it only means welfare and happiness The test he applies to every action, the touch-stone, is ," How will society benefit ?" Whatever he speaks, writes, or does, he would make sure that it does good, not harm, to the world. He would never agree to anything that is useless or harmful One who wishes for the world's welfare is indeed a *mahatma* His whole happiness is in the welfare of the world

The first kind of *bhakta*, the afflicted one, looks at the whole world through eyes of love ; the second kind, the seeker of knowledge, through the eye of discovery ; and the third, the seeker of meaning, from the point of view of the world's welfare

Though these three kinds of *bhaktas* are all disinterested, still they are one-sided One reaches the Lord through *karma*, the second through love, the third through knowledge What remains is the perfect *bhakta*, and he may be called the *jnani-bhakta*, the seer-saint All that he sees he regards as forms of God In the ugly as in the handsome person,

in the beggar as in the king. in men, women, animals and birds, everywhere he sees only the pure presence of God. Tukaram prays, "Make my mind such, Oh Lord, that it sees men, women and children, all as Narayana" We have in Hinduism such mad rites as the worship of the serpent, the elephant-headed God, and trees; but we see greater madness in the seer-saints From the ant to the sun and the moon, in all that they see, everywhere, they behold the Lord, and in their hearts beat the waves of the ocean of joy "An endless, boundless bliss, a sea of joy, wells up."

This divine and beautiful vision, you may call an illusion if you like But this illusion is a source of comfort, a fund of joy. In the majestic ocean he sees the grandeur of the Lord, in Mother Cow he sees the mother-like tenderness of God, in the earth he sees His patience, in the clear sky His purity, in sun, moon and stars, His brightness and beauty. In the flower he sees His softness, and in evil men, the Lord who tests and tries us. Thus he practises the art of seeing the one God at play everywhere, and doing so, one day, the seer-saint merges into the Lord.

CHAPTER VIII

ACHIEVING THE GOAL—THE YOGA OF CONSTANCY

(36) Developing good samskaras

Human life is full of the play of *samskaras*—tendencies developed by repeated actions Innumerable actions are going on through us all the time If we started counting them, we should never come to an end Even if we take a superficial look at the activities that go on in twenty-four hours, do you realise how huge the number would be ? Eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, walking, wandering, a little work, writing, talking, reading—besides these, how many dreams, likes and dislikes, honour and dishonour, pain and pleasure, in endless variety ! And they all leave associations, build up tendencies in the mind Hence, if someone asks me what life is, I should explain it as an aggregate of *samskaras*

Samskaras can be bad as well as good. And they both have their effects on human life We cannot even recollect the actions of our infancy , our childhood is like something written on a slate and rubbed off The *samskaras* of a former birth are like writing completely rubbed out—so much so that one wonders whether there was a former birth at all. When we do not remember our childhood even in this birth, why talk of previous births ? Never mind former births ; let us think of this one It is not as if only those things which we remember took place Many are the things done, and many the things known , but all this action and knowledge disappear, leaving only a trace of *samskara* behind. If when we go to bed at night we try to recollect all our actions of the day, they don't all come back. What actions do come back before our mind's eye ? Only those which were vivid and distinct If we had a quarrel with someone, the impres-

sion lasts, for that was the day's earnings. Important and distinct actions leave a deep impression on the mind, other actions fade away from memory When we write a diary, we mention only two or three outstanding events When from these daily accounts we make up a weekly summary, many even of these will drop out, and only the most outstanding events remain In the same way, in a month or six months, in a year or five years, very few outstanding events alone remain in the memory and it is these which form our *samskara*. Though innumerable actions take place, and endless knowledge is acquired, in the end, the mind retains very little of it all All those various actions, all that varied knowledge, came along, and did their work and disappeared. Out of all this action only a few lasting *samskaras* are left. And these form our capital. We conduct the business of life and accumulate *samskara* The merchant keeps his daily, monthly and annual accounts of income and expenditure, and at the end arrives at the single figure of profit or loss, in the course of our lives, we enter on the credit side various *samskaras*, but at the end a single, firm, clear figure remains in the account In the last moments of life the soul begins to think of this final figure. As it looks back on all the achievements of a life-time, it realises that the gains are just two or three things This does not mean that all those actions and all that knowledge have been wasted They have done their work, and that is all After the thousands of transactions, the nett result is just a loss of five thousand rupees, or a profit of ten thousand rupees If there is a loss his heart sinks, and if there is a gain it bounds with joy

We too are in the same position. If at the moment of death one wants something to eat, that is conclusive proof that all our lives we have trained ourselves but to please the palate All that we have laid up in a long life is a taste for eating and drinking—this is the *vasana* we carry over. If a

mother at the moment of death thinks of her child, we may take it that her strongest *samskara* is love of her child, all her other innumerable actions, it is clear, are secondary. In arithmetic we are familiar with problems in proper fractions; but however big the figures, when we reduce them, the result approximates to zero or one In the same way, a single powerful *samskara* alone remains at last as the essential thing. This is the answer to the problem of life The thought arising in the final moment is the fruit of the whole of one's life.

All the efforts of life should be guided by the idea that this final fruit should be full of sweetness, that the last moment should be blissful When the end is sweet, all else is sweet We should fix the mind on this final answer while solving the problems of life Plan the whole of life with this ideal in view In arriving at the answer to a problem, we should keep the main issue in mind. We should direct the current of our lives in such a way that we strengthen the *samskara* which we wish to be firm in the last moment of our lives Our whole attention should be turned in that direction, day and night.

(37) Remember the moment of death

In this Chapter it is stated that the thought that is uppermost at the moment of death prevails in the succeeding birth. The soul sets out for the journey ahead, with this provision for the way Taking today's earnings with us, after a night's sleep, we begin tomorrow In the same way, with the accumulations of this life, after the heavy sleep of death, we resume the journey in the next birth The end of this *janma* is the beginning of the next Walk through life having in mind the hour of death.

This is necessary also because we should conquer the fear of death and make it easy to cross over There is a story about Eknath A man asked him, "Maharaj, your life is

so simple and sinless Why is our life utterly different? You are angry with none, you quarrel with none, you hate none How calm, how loving, how pure you are!" Eknath replied, "Never mind me I have found out something about you In seven days from now, you will die." Who could disbelieve Eknath's words? Death in seven days? Only 168 hours left Oh, God, what a calamity! He ran in haste to his house Nothing seemed clear to him He was talking of disposing of his affairs and preparing for the end Then he fell ill He lay flat on his bed. Six days passed On the seventh day, Eknath came to visit him He greeted the saint Eknath enquired, "How are you?" He said, "All is over. Now I am going" Eknath asked further, "In these six days, how many sins did you commit? And how many sinful thoughts came into your mind?" And the man who had been awaiting death answered, "Lord, where was the time to think of evil thoughts? Death stood ever before my eyes" Eknath said, "Now you know the reason, don't you, why our lives are absolutely sinless? When Death the Lion stands always before us, how can evil thoughts appear? Even to sin, one needs freedom from anxiety. Constantly thinking of death is a means of avoiding sin. If death is always staring him in the face, with what strength can man commit sin?"

But man tries to push away the thought of death. The French philosopher Pascal says in his *Pensees* ("Thoughts"), "As men are not able to fight against death, misery, ignorance, they have taken it into their heads, in order to be happy, not to think of them at all To be happy he would have to make himself immortal, but, not being able to do so, it has occurred to him to prevent himself from thinking of death"

"Death is always standing behind us But man's effort to forget it goes on all the time He never considers how to

live remembering death" Man does not like even the word, "Death." If at dinner the word is uttered, we cut it short saying, "How inauspicious!" But every step we take is a step that takes us towards death. Once we buy a ticket to Bombay and sit in the train, though we keep sitting, the train will carry us to Bombay and deliver us there. At birth we take a ticket to the destination, death. Whether we sit still or run about, death is certain. Whether we think of it or do not think of it, it will come. However uncertain all other things are, death is certain. As the sun sets on the western hill, it has devoured a portion of our life. Thus our days decrease, life tapers off, drop by drop the cup is emptied—but man takes no notice of all this. Jnaneswar says, "How curious!" He wonders how men could be so thoughtless. Man has become so frightened of death that he cannot bear even the thought of it. He tries to keep off all thought of it. He sits down bandaging his eyes. Soldiers going to the front play, dance, sing and smoke, to forget death. Pascal writes, "The only thing which consoles us for our miseries is diversion, and yet this is the greatest of our miseries. For it is this which principally hinders us from reflecting upon ourselves, and which makes us insensibly ruin ourselves . . . Diversion amuses us, and leads us unconsciously to death."

"Though he sees death everywhere, the soldier loses himself in eating and drinking, singing and dancing, all in order to forget it."

We are all like the soldier. Keeping a round, laughing face, if it is withered, applying cream and powder, and dyeing grey hair—all this, man does. Death is dancing on our chest, but we try endlessly to put it out of our minds. We are ready to talk about all other things, but not about death. You ask a boy who has just passed his Matriculation, "What do you propose to do?" He replies, "Don't ask me now; I am only in my first year at College." If you ask him again the

following year, he would say, "Let me first finish the Intermediate, there will be time enough to worry" And so it goes on But shouldn't one think in advance of the future? Should not one see the path in front clearly before taking a step, to avoid pitfalls? But the student shirks this task What the poor fellow studies only serves to shed darkness on the path ahead So he takes good care not to ask the question what he could do in life He may be surrounded by darkness on all sides, but he cannot prevent what is bound to come, it will surely come about

The Professor of Logic begins Deduction at College: "Man is mortal Socrates is a man Therefore Socrates is mortal" But why bring in Socrates, why not cite his own example? The Professor too is mortal But he never says, "All men are mortal Therefore I, the Professor, am mortal, and you the students too are mortal" He passes on to Socrates the liability to die, for Socrates, luckily, is already dead He is not likely now to stand up and protest So the teacher and the pupils establish the mortality of Socrates, and as for themselves, enter into a conspiracy of silence. They fancy that they have warded off danger thus.

In this way, people are all the time making heroic efforts to forget death But can one ever get rid of death by such means? Only the other day, when my mother died, death stood before me But there is a way of conquering death by thinking fearlessly about it, but this way we dare not seek and find A lion pursues a deer The nimble deer flees in fright, but soon it gets tired, and its strength fails. But Death in the form of the lion pursues it The state of the poor creature at that moment is indeed pitiable—it cannot even look at the lion It buries its antlers and face in the earth, and stands helpless, as if inviting the lion to come and devour it We too dare not face death But although we try all tricks to run away from it, it is powerful enough to catch us at last by our neck

And when death comes, man takes stock of his life's accounts. The stupid and lazy candidate dips his pen in the inkpot and takes it out, but he cannot collect enough courage to blacken the paper My fellow, do you mean to start writing, or don't you ? Surely, you don't expect Saraswati to take the pen out of your hand and write for you ? Alas, the three hours are over , and he folds and submits the paper blank, or with a few lines scrawled on it It does not occur to him to try to understand the questions and answer them He wastes his time looking this way and that. Our plight too is no different Therefore, remembering that death is the crown of life, we should constantly practise the means by which we can make our last moments holy, pure and sweet From now on we should think what we should do to impress on our minds the most noble and beautiful *samskaras* But who worries about acquiring good *samskaras* ? Instead of this, day and night, the training in bad ways goes on. We teach the tongue, the eyes and the ears to be greedy We should give a far different training to the *chitta*, the mind and heart We should steep and dye the *chitta* in good things From the instant we discover an error, we should try and correct it Once we know it is a mistake, how can we go on doing it ? The moment we discover a mistake, we are reborn Then begins for us a new childhood, a new dawn in life. Now we are truly awake From now on we should examine our life day and night and walk warily Else we shall slip, and fall into bad habits again

Many years ago I went on a visit to my old grandmother. She complained, " Vinya, I remember nothing these days I go to fetch the ghee-pot, and then come back forgetting all about it " But she talked to me about some trouble about a jewel which occurred fifty years earlier She could not remember what happened five minutes before, but something fifty years old was still fresh in her memory How to account

for this ? She must have been talking about the jewel affair again and again to a great many people—and therefore, it had become a part of her life I prayed within myself, " Oh God, *don't let my grandmother think of the jewel at the time* of death !"

(38) Be forever steeped in it

The thing we practise day and night sticks to us Let us not be deceived by the story of Ajamila He was to all appearances a sinner, but hidden deep in his life was a stream of holiness This came to the surface at the moment of death. If you imagine that you would remember the name of Rama at the last moment, even if you had been a sinner all your life, you are sure to be disappointed You will have to train the mind aright from childhood Take constant care that good *samskaras* alone come to the mind Don't say, " What does it matter whether one gets up at four in the morning or at seven ?" Talk of this sort is pointless. By letting the mind go as it pleases, you will defeat yourself Then you will never acquire good *samskaras* We have to accumulate wealth coin by coin , we must gather wisdom without wasting even a moment Watch, therefore, that only good *samskaras* take root in the mind Any bad word that comes out of your mouth starts an evil *samskara* Every act is a stroke that chisels into shape the marble of our life. Even if the day passes well, evil thoughts disturb our dreams It is not as if only the affairs of the immediate past appear in dreams So many *samskaras* lie hidden in our minds behind the veil of forgetfulness We cannot tell when they will come out into the open Therefore, we should be vigilant even over little things A drowning man clutches even at a straw And we are drowning in the ocean of *samsara* If we utter a good word, even that serves as a support to us A good deed done is never wasted , it will take you ashore. There should not be even the slightest trace of a bad *samskara*.

Strive always to keep the eyes pure, the ears closed against blame, the tongue engaged in good speech If you are thus careful, you will draw a good prize at the time of death We will become the masters of life and death

To create such good *samskaras*, let noble thoughts course through the mind Let the hands be busy doing deeds of goodness. Thoughts of God within, and the performance of *svadharma* without, the hands performing the *karma* of service and in the mind, *vikarma*, the special action of the mind—these should go on constantly. Look at Gandhiji He spins on the charkha every day He insists on our doing so too But why spin every day ? Is it not enough if we spin now and then for the cloth we need ? But then, this would only be a worldly or secular activity Spinning daily is spiritual , it indicates an inner desire to do what we can for our country The thread we spin binds us day by day with *Daridranarayan* (God in the form of the poor) It strengthens the good association, the *samskara*

The doctor prescribes a medicine to be taken daily by us. But what if we drank it up all at once ? It would be too much of a good thing , anyhow, the purpose will not be fulfilled. By the continuous good effect of a course of medicine, the faults in nature should be set right The same holds good of life. We perform *abhisheka* (ceremonial bathing) of Siva in a thin continuous stream I am fond of this example I used to see this every day when I was a child If you collect all the water used in twenty-four hours, you might perhaps get two buckets Why not pour the two bucketfuls all at once on Siva's head ? I got the answer to this even as a child If we overturn the bucket in one breath, the *karma* would not bear fruit The flow of the water drop by drop is worship The flow of our *samskaras* should be even and perpetual, like this water of worship In the morning, at noon and again in the evening, by day and by night, the same yesterday,

today and tomorrow, the same this year and the next, so too in *janma* after *janma* (birth after birth), the same in life as in death, the divine stream of *samskara*, made up of little drops of action, should flow uninterruptedly, all through one's life It is only when this stream flows unbroken, that we can reach our goal and plant there the flag of victory And this stream of *samskara* should flow steadily in the same direction Otherwise it would be like water falling on a rock, and scattered in many directions, without ever forming a river On the contrary, if all the water runs in one direction, it becomes a stream and, gathering force as it goes down the mountains, it becomes a mighty river like the Ganga, and mixes with the sea The stream that runs in one direction reaches the sea, but the water that is scattered in many directions soon dries up The same is true of *samskaras* If they come and go, of what use are they ? It is only when the pure stream of *samskaras* flows unbroken through life that the death that comes at its end will appear as a bringer of bliss The traveller who does not tarry by the way, escapes the delusions and temptations that beset him, and walks with firm steps up the steep ascent, and reaches the mountain-top, and there throws down the burden on his back, and enjoys the free air that blows there—who but he can experience such joy ? But the sun will not stay for the traveller that dallies by the way

(39) War day and night

All this means that when the outward performance of *svadharma* and the purificatory interior action of remembering God go on together, when the stream of *karma* without and *vikarma* within flows continuously, death will be a bringer of joy That is why the Lord says,

" Remember me at all times and fight "

"*Tasmaat sarveshu kaaleshu maamanusmara yuddhya cha*"

" Steep yourself in Him always " Be forever absorbed in Him. When love for the Lord pervades you within and

without, and fills the whole of your life, only then will you find a constant joy in holy things Then evil tendencies will not appear before you Beautiful and noble desires sprout in the heart, good deeds come naturally.

It is true that, when one always remembers the Lord, good deeds come naturally to one, but the Lord also commands, "Be fighting all the time"

Tukaram says,

> "Night and day, within and without, in the heart and in the world, we are at war"

Within and without us spreads a boundless creation With all these created things, the mind is at war without a pause. We cannot say that, in this war, victory will be ours in every battle. He who wins in the end is the true conqueror It is the final decision that prevails If on many occasions one earns honour, on many others one earns dishonour Disgrace or defeat is no cause for depondency If after nineteen strokes the stone does not break, but it does at the twentieth stroke, have the first nineteen been wasted? Did they not make possible the success of the twentieth?

To lose hope is to become an atheist Have the faith that the Lord is our protector To develop self-confidence in the child, the mother allows it freedom to wander, but she would not let it fall When she sees it about to fall, she rushes to its help The Lord keeps watch over you He holds in His hand the string of your life's kite Sometimes He pulls the string taut, at others leaves it loose, but be sure the string is ever in his hand At the ghats of the Ganga, they teach swimming, a rope is tied to a tree on the bank and the other end to the waist of the learner, before he is thrown into the water But the teacher stands in the water ready to pull him up The novice sinks and rises up a few times, but in the end masters the art of swimming In the same way, the Lord teaches us the art of living

(40) The bright and the dark paths

Therefore, if, with faith in the Lord, you fight day and night, in thought, word and deed, the last moment will be wonderfully perfect Then all the divine powers will favour you It is this lesson that is taught through images at the end of this Chapter Understand this image If, at the time of one's death, fire burns, the sun shines, the moon waxes and the sun moves northward through the beautiful cloudless heavens, such a one merges in *brahman* But if smoke piles up, and it darkens within and the moon wanes and the sun moves southward through the dark cloudy sky, such a one gets caught again in the vortex of birth and death

Many people read this and get bewildered If you want a holy death, you should seek the grace of fire, the sun, the moon and the sky Fire is the symbol of *karma* and *yajna*, of work and sacrifice Even at the end, the flames of *yajna* should keep burning Justice Ranade used to say, "He is lucky who dies in the unremitting performance of duty. I shall be happy if I die while reading, writing, or working" This is what is meant by saying that "fire is burning" If one is to keep working even at the moment of death, one must have the grace of fire (*agni*) That the intellect shines bright and undimmed until the last moment, is by the sun's grace By the grace of the moon pure *bhavanas* (thoughts and feelings) wax and increase in the mind at the time of death The moon is the god of the mind, of *bhavana* Like the moon of the bright fortnight, so devotion, love, energy, benevolence, compassion and such pure *bhavanas* should wax and grow perfect in the mind The grace of the sky means that the firmament of the mind is clear of the clouds of desire Once Gandhiji said, "I keep shouting of the charkha day and night I consider the charkha a holy thing And yet, at the last moment, even this concern, this *vasana*, should disappear He who inspired me with this love of the charkha

can very well look after it Himself The charkha has now been taken up by many good people. I must now give up worrying about the charkha and get ready to join the Lord" The northward journey means that the heart should be free of the clouds of attachment

When the hands perform acts of service till the last breath, the full moon of *bhavana* shines brightly, the mind's sky is free from desire, and the intellect is bright and keen—when a man dies in this state, we may take it that he has merged in the Lord In order to make such an auspicious ending, one must watch day and night and wage skilful war Not even for an instant should an evil tendency be permitted in the mind And in order to gain the strength necessary for this, one should pray constantly to the Lord Again and again, one should remember His name and meditate on His truth

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CHAPTER IX

THE KINGLY ART OF SERVICE TO HUMANITY— THE YOGA OF DEDICATION

(41) Knowledge through direct experience

These talks of mine are not meant to teach others No doubt those who want to profit from them may surely do so For my part, when I talk on the *Gita*, I regard it as *Ram-nam* As I go on speaking, it is to me the same experience as uttering the Names of God

Between what I have been saying now and the Ninth Chapter there is a close connection In this Chapter is described the rare power of the name of God This Chapter is placed at the centre of the *Gita*, as the *Gita* itself is at the centre of the *Mahabharata* For many reasons, this Chapter has been considered holy It is said Jnanadev, in his final *samadhi*, recited this Chapter and breathed his last At the very thought of this Chapter, tears come to my eyes, and my heart is full. How great is the gift that Vyasadeva has given to us ! This is his gift not to India alone, but to all mankind What the Lord taught to Arjuna could not be expressed in words But Vyasa, moved by compassion, put it into Sanskrit speech , he clothed in words the ineffable secret At the beginning of this Chapter, the Lord says,

> " *Raajavidyaa raajaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam* "
>
> " This is the supreme knowledge, the supreme secret, the highest and the purest "

And this unique knowledge is something to be experienced directly The Lord says it is " *pratyakshaavagama*," knowledge to be realised by oneself—a knowledge which is beyond words, but which has been tested on the touchstone of direct experience That is why it is so sweet, Tulasidas has said —

> " Who knows who will go to Yama's abode, and who to the higher world, the home of the gods ?

To Tulsi it seems best to live on this earth as
Rama's slave."

It is the sweetness of living in the service of Rama that is found in this Chapter What can be experienced in this body, seen directly with these eyes, enjoyed here and now in this life, is described here When we eat sugar, its sweetness is directly experienced. The sweetness of living as Rama's servant is experienced in the same direct manner here. The supreme knowledge which reveals to us the sweetness in this mortal life is the subject of this Chapter Though this knowledge is a hidden secret, the Lord opens it out for all to understand with ease

(42) The easy way

The *Gita* is the essence of the Vedic *dharma*, that is, the way of life derived from the *Vedas*. The *Vedas* are considered to be older than all the other Scriptures in the world That is why enthusiasts call them "*anadi*," uncreated Thus the *Vedas* are accorded special reverence Even if we approach them from the historical point of view, they are the most ancient expression of the earliest experiences of our race These literary records are more valuable than copper-plates, stone inscriptions, coins, vessels and the remains of animals The earliest historical evidence in the world is provided by the *Vedas*. The *dharma* which was but a seed in the *Vedas* grew and became a tree and yielded at last the sweet fruit of the *Gita* What else but the fruit of the tree can we eat? It is only when the tree yields fruit that we get something to eat The *Gita* is the twice-distilled essence of the Vedic *dharma*.

In this Vedic *dharma*, which had grown from the most ancient times, are mentioned various *yagas* and *yajnas*, rites and rituals, many penances and practices This Chapter of Observance is not useless, but it requires a fitness in the doer. To acquire this was not easy for every one. Who is to climb up the tall coconut tree, pluck the fruit, remove the fibre,

break it and get at the kernel ? However hungry I may be, what use is the fruit up there in the tree to me ? I look up at the coconut and the coconut looks down at me How can it quench the fire of my hunger, until it reaches my hands ? These various rites were filled with subtle ideas How could the common folk comprehend them ? There is no *moksha* except through the Vedic path ; but few had the fitness to study the Vedas What happens to the others, then ? Hence the saints, filled with compassion, came forward saying, " Come, we shall take out the essence of the Vedas We shall give it to the world in a simple form " Tukaram sings,

" Infinite are the Vedas ; but this is their substance "

What is that substance ? The Name of the Lord The Name of the Lord is the essence of the *Vedas* It is certain that through *Ramanama* one can attain *moksha*, which means that *moksha* has become easy for women, children, *sudras*, *vaisyas*, the rustic and the poor, the weak, the sick and the lame, indeed for everyone The *moksha* that lay locked up in the Vedas as in a strong box, the Lord has brought out and placed at the cross-roads What a direct and easy way to *moksha* ! One's ordinary life, what one does as *svadharma*, one's acts of service, why not make this itself a *yajna*, a sacrifice? Where is the need for any other sacrifice, any *yagas* or *yajnas* ? Regard as a *yajna*, and continue to perform, the ordinary work of service that you do every day This is the royal road,

> " *yam aasthaaya naro raajan na pramaadyeta karhichit dhaavan nimilya vaa netre na skhalet na patet iha* "
>
> " On which, even if you run with closed eyes, there is no danger of stumbling or falling "

The other path is like a razor's edge, sharp and difficult to traverse—" *kshurasya dhaaraa nisitaa duratyayaa* ," the Vedic way is sharper and more perilous than the edge of a sword How much easier is the way of service to Rama The engineer

makes the gradient so gentle that we reach the top almost unaware that we are climbing This is the merit of the royal road too. Where the man stands and works, through that ordinary task, he is able to reach the Supreme—such is this method

Does the Lord hide Himself somewhere, in some cave or crevice, in some river or in some heaven ? Diamonds and rubies, gold and silver, lie hidden in the bowels of the earth, pearls and corals in the depths of the sea But is this gem, the Lord, hidden somewhere ? Have we to dig Him up ? Why, He stands all the time before all of us Everyone here is a manifestation of the Lord The Lord says, "Do not dishonour the person of the Lord manifest in human form, my brother " It is the Lord that appears as all things moving and unmoving Where is the need for artificial aids to seek and find Him ? The way is straight and easy. Relate to the Lord whatever service you perform ; that is enough Become Rama's servant No doubt those arduous Vedic processes, the *yajna*, the *svaha*, the *svadha*, the *sraddha*, the *tarpana* (Vedic rituals), will take us towards *moksha* But they raise the problem of the fit and the unfit We need none of it Do just this much Whatever you do, dedicate to the Lord Relate to Him every act of yours This is what the Ninth Chapter teaches Hence it is most dear to *bhaktas*

(43) No question of fitness

The most charming part of Krishna's life is his childhood It is Bala-Krishna, the young Krishna, that we cherish in our hearts and worship He goes out with other cowherd boys grazing cattle , he eats and laughs and plays with them When they set out to worship Indra, he told them, "Who has seen Indra ? How has he helped us ? But this Govardhan hill stands here before our eyes. Our cattle graze on its slopes Streams flow from it Let us therefore worship it " Such things he taught them To his cowherd companions,

to the *gopis* with whom he laughed and talked, to the cows and calves he rejoiced in, to them all he opened the door of *moksha* The Supreme Lord Krishna has shown us in experience this easy way. He moved with cows and calves in his childhood, with horses when he grew up On hearing the music of his flute the cows went into ecstasy , the horses thrilled to the touch of his hand as he stroked them The cows and calves, the chariot-horses, were filled with Krishna, became one with Him Even those creatures, supposed to be born in sin, attained *moksha* Sri Krishna made it clear that not only men but animals and birds had the right to *moksha*. He proved it in practice in His life.

Krishna's experience was Vyasa's too. Krishna and Vyasa are one The essence of their lives is the same *Moksha* does not depend upon one's learning or performance of rites. All it needs is straight and simple *bhakti* While learned men who say "I, I," are left behind, innocent and devout women go forward When the mind is pure and the heart full of simplicity and holiness, *moksha* is not difficult to attain. There is a Chapter in the *Mahabharata* describing the conversation between Janaka and Sulabha. Vyasa creates a situation where Janaka approaches a woman to learn wisdom from her. You may go on discussing whether women have the right to study the Vedas , but here we see before our eyes Sulabha teaching divine wisdom to King Janaka She is an ordinary woman, and he an emperor and a profound scholar. But the wise Janaka had not attained *moksha*. And so Vyasa sends him to fall at the feet of Sulabha The story of the *vaisya* (merchant) Tuladhar is similar. The brahmin Jajali goes to him in search of wisdom Tuladhar tells him, "All my wisdom consists in holding the scales even" Similar too is the story of the hunter He killed animals and sold meat. That was how he served society An arrogant brahmin ascetic was asked by his guru to approach the hunter and

learn wisdom from him The brahmin wondered, "What can this butcher teach me?" Still he went to him and saw him cutting the meat, washing it and displaying it for sale He said to the brahmin, "Look, I am doing this work as well as I can, making it a form of *dharma* I pour all my soul into this work, and serve my parents" In the form of this hunter Vyasadeva puts before us an ideal man

The purpose of introducing into the *Mahabharata* these stories about a woman, a *vaisva* and a *sudra* is to make it clear that the doors of *moksha* are open to all. It is this truth that is taught in the Ninth Chapter It sets the seal of approval on these stories The joy of living in Rama's service was found in the hunter's life Tukaram was a lover of *ahimsa* but he describes with gusto the story of Sajan the butcher who found *moksha* by being a butcher Tukaram asks elsewhere, "Lord, what salvation is there for those who kill animals?" But he writes, "With the butcher Sajan He sells meat," and thus says that the Lord was a friend and helper of the butcher The Lord who rolls paper for Narsi Mehta, who carries water for the water-carrier Ekanath, who helps the cobbler Damaji in his shoe-making, who helps Janabai, beloved of the Maharashtrians, in pounding and grinding grain, that same Lord also helps the butcher Sajan with the same love, says Tukaram The moral is that we should surrender all our actions to the Lord If the action is filled with pure *bhavana*, with the attitude of service, it becomes a *yajna*

(44) Dedicate to the Lord the fruit of action

It is this important truth which is described in the Ninth Chapter, where *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* are beautifully blended *Karma-yoga* means doing the action, but renouncing the fruit Act with such skill that the fragrance of the fruit, the desire for reward, does not touch the mind It is like planting a walnut tree The walnut tree takes twenty-five

years to yield fruit. The man who plants it rarely gets the chance of eating in his own lifetime the fruit of the tree he planted And yet he has to plant and water and look after the tree lovingly *Karma-yoga* means planting and minding the tree but not desiring the fruit. What is *bhakti-yoga* ? It means becoming one with the Lord through devotion. In *raja-yoga*, both *karma* and *bhakti* are combined *Raja-yoga* has been explained by different people in different ways But I should describe it briefly as a beautiful combination of *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*.

Let us perform action, and not throw away the fruit but dedicate it to God. To throw away the fruit would be to reject it, but dedication is different. What a lovely arrangement ! There is a wonderful sweetness in it Renouncing the fruit does not mean that no one would get the benefit of it It will reach someone or the other, someone or the other will surely receive it Then the question may arise whether he who gets the benefit deserves it If a beggar comes to our door, we say, " You are strong and sturdy. Why should you beg ? Get away " We consider whether it is right or wrong for him to beg The poor fellow is ashamed and goes away. There is no trace of fellow-feeling in our heart Further, how are we to determine the deserts of the man who begs ? Once, in my childhood, I expressed such a doubt to my mother, and the answer she gave me then is still ringing in my ears I told her, " This beggar is hale and healthy If we give him alms, we should be only encouraging laziness and bad habits " And I went on to quote the words from the Gita, " *dese kaale cha paatre cha*," (in the right place, at the right time, to the deserving person) She answered, " He who has come to beg is none else than the Lord Now you may decide whether he is fit to receive your alms Or would you say that the Lord is not fit ? What right have you and I to judge of fitness ? I see no need for all this question-

ing To me he is the Lord." And to this day I do not know any argument that will meet this answer.

I consider fitness when it is a question of feeding another, but when it comes to filling my own stomach, the thought of fitness doesn't occur to me The man who comes to our door for food, why should we look on him as just a beggar ? Why should I not see that, when I give something to someone, I am giving it to God. *Raja-yoga* says, "The benefit of your *karma* goes to someone, doesn't it ? If so, give it over to the Lord, dedicate it to Him." *Raja-yoga* points out the proper recipient. There is no negative action of renouncing the fruit in *raja-yoga*, and since everything is dedicated to the Lord, the question of fitness or unfitness is eliminated. The gift that is offered to the Lord is always pure. Even if there are impurities in your action, it will become pure when it reaches His hands. However hard we try to make our actions perfect, there will still be some shortcomings Nevertheless, let us act with the utmost possible purity The intellect is God's gift It is our duty to use it in as pure a form as possible. It would be a sin not to do so So we should think of fitness and unfitness , but the decision becomes easy when you are devoted to the Lord

For attaining purity of mind, we should give away the fruit Dedicate to the Lord every action as it takes shape. As actions take shape before our eyes, dedicate them then and there to the Lord and be content We do not give up the fruit, we only give it over to the Lord. Why only the fruit, even the *vasanas*, the tendencies that arise in the mind, and the deformations like lust and anger—place them all at the feet of the Lord, and be free from care

"My lust and my anger, I surrender to Vitthal"

Here there is no need to torture oneself in the fire of self-control Surrender promptly and find freedom. No holding down or cutting off

"If the sickness can be cured by milk and sugar, why drink the bitter juice of *neem* ?" The senses also are means for our use Dedicate them to the Lord. People complain that the ears do not listen to such good advice Are we then to close our ears ? No, we should keep them open, but only to stories of Hari. It is difficult to keep the ears from hearing But it is very easy, it is pleasant and profitable, to make them listen to stories of Hari Give your ears to Rama. Use your mouth to utter Rama's name. The senses are not enemies They are our friends. Their power for good is boundless. Therefore, the best and noblest way to use every one of the senses is with the intellect surrendered to the Lord. This is called *raja-yoga.*

(45) No need for special activity

It is not as if we should dedicate to the Lord only particular kinds of action We should dedicate to him all our action as such With what love Rama accepted the fruit offered by Sabari ! One need not go and sit in a cave to worship God Whatever action you perform, wherever you may perform it, surrender it to God The mother waiting on her child waits on God When she bathes her child, she is performing *Rudra-abhisheka* for God The mother, regarding the child as a gift from God, should tend it with devotion How tenderly did Kausalya care for Rama and Yasoda for Krishna Suka, Valmiki and Tulsidas consider themselves lucky in describing this tenderness and do it with unbounded enthusiasm The mother's act of tender care is indeed noble What greater fortune could come to her than serving the image of the Lord, her child ? When we serve each other, if only we did it with this attitude, how would our actions be transformed ! We should have the *bhavana* that whatever work comes to us, it is the service of the Lord Himself

The farmer serves his bullock Is the bullock to be despised? No, the bull that Vamadeva in the *Vedas* describes as pervading

the universe in the form of *sakti* (energy), is present in the farmer's bullock too.

> " *chatvaari sringaa trayo asya paadaa*
> *dve sirshe sapta hastaaso asya*
> *tridhaa baddho vrshabho roravitti*
> *maho devo martyaan aavivesa* "

"The bull which has four horns, three legs, two heads and seven hands is bound in three places and, becoming mighty in splendour, pervades all mortal things It is this same bull that roars and fills the universe which the farmer worships" The commentators have interpreted this passage in a variety of ways. And this bullock too is wonderful! The bull that roars in the heavens and pours down the rains is present in the farmer's bullock which drops down dung and urine to fertilise the field If a farmer serves his cattle with this noble *bhavana*, even this ordinary work of his becomes worship of the Lord

In the same way, the mistress of the household tries to feed and please the family by keeping the kitchen clean, lighting the fire and preparing pure and wholesome food, and all these acts of hers are *yajna*, sacrificial action Is this a mere oven, is it not a sacrificial fire kindled by the mother? How pure and holy the food will be when it is cooked with the *bhavana* of pleasing the Lord—just think of it If the *grhalakshmi* ("the goddess of the household") is inspired by such noble thoughts and feelings, we should think of her as belonging to the race of the *rishipatnis* (the wives of the *rishis*) described in the *Bhagavata* While ever so many mothers have attained *moksha* through service, scholars and learned men who are thinking of themselves all the time are cast in corners uncared for

(46) All life can be filled with God

The moments of our daily life may appear commonplace, but in reality they are not so, they carry enormous significance.

All one's life is a great *yajna-karma*, a continual sacrificial performance. What is sleep ? It is a kind of *samadhi*, an experience of oneness. If we surrender all our enjoyments to the Lord before we fall asleep, what is sleep but *samadhi* ? There is a custom among us of reciting the *Purushasukta* while taking a bath Now what is the connection between the *Purushasukta* and a bath ? You will surely see it if you try What is the connection between the *virat purusha*, the Cosmic Person, with his thousand hands and thousand eyes, and this my bath ? The connection is that, in the pitcher of water that you pour down on your head, there are thousands of drops Those drops wash your head—they rid you of your sins It is like the blessing of the Lord showered on your head. The thousand hands of the Lord are pouring a thousand streams on your head Through these drops the Lord Himself is purifying your mind and heart If you pour this divine *bhavana* into this act, the bath will assume a new quality and acquire a boundless power

Any action performed with this *bhavana*, that is, a feeling that it is God's work, becomes a sacrament , this has been tested by experience Assume for a while that the visitor to your house is the Lord Himself When, in the ordinary course, a distinguished guest is expected in our house, how we clean and polish and what a grand feast do we prepare ! But if we think that the Lord Himself is the guest, would it not make a vast difference to our feelings ? Kabir was busy at his loom , he was absorbed in his work and sang

"*jhini jhini jhini jhini bini chadariya*"

He forgot himself as if he were weaving a *chaddar* for the Lord. The *rishi* of the *Rgveda* says —

vastreva bhadraa sukrtaa supaani

I offer this my hymn like a garment woven well by lovely hands to the Lord The poet makes his songs for the Lord's sake And he who spins and weaves cloth, he too does it

for the Lord's sake Here is a thought to touch the heart, to purify and exhilarate Once this *bhavana* comes into our life, how flawless would our days become ! When the light flashes in darkness, does not the darkness disappear instantaneously ? Is it destroyed gradually ? No, in one instant the whole thing within and without is transformed. In the same way, the moment we relate every action to the Lord, at once, a wonderful new energy flows into our life Every action becomes pure. We are filled with enthusiasm Where is the zest in our life today ? We are alive only because we are not yet dead. There is a dearth of enthusiasm all round Life is dark, ugly and full of sorrow But, just for a while, let the mind consider that all our actions are for the sake of the Lord Then we will realise how full of beauty and value our lives become

There is no doubt that one name of God transforms life at once. Don't say what good can the word "Rama" do. Just try saying it and see what happens. In the evening, after his day's work, the farmer returns home On the way he meets a traveller, and says to him—

"The night is falling, Narayana , come home with me" As the farmer says, "Brother traveller, Oh Narayana, stop for a while It is night, Lord, come to my house," his word changes the traveller, does it not? Even if he is a dacoit or a robber, he is transformed into a friend This conversion is due to the *bhavana* ; such is the power of *bhavana* to transform all things *Bhavana* is the substance of life A strange lad of twenty comes to the house. The father gives him his daughter. The old man touches the feet of the youngster—what does this mean ? How holy is this act of giving away a daughter ! He who accepts the gift is regarded as God himself This *bhavana* which we take to a son-in-law, let us carry it further and higher

Some may object, "What do we gain by making these false suppositions?" But I would say "Don't start with such talk of truth and falsehood Practise it first, and gain experience of it, then you will know what is true and what is false. If at the marriage ceremony you do not merely say in words, but feel at heart, that the bridegroom is the Lord Himself, you will realise what a great difference this makes As a result of this holy *bhavana*, the object will change so much that its later form will differ from its earlier as heaven from earth The undeserving becomes deserving, and the evil good Was it not in this way that Balya (Valmiki) the hunter was converted? There in the forest, the sage Narada's fingers dance on the strings of the *vina*, he sings the name of Narayana, the robber Balya runs towards him to kill him Even then, his calm undisturbed, the sage looks on him with eyes full of love Never till now had Balya seen such a thing He had seen only two kinds of animal—one which fled from his bow and arrow and another which turned round on him and attacked him But Narada neither fled nor flared up at sight of him, but stood there at peace Balya's bow and arrow stood still Narada would neither raise his brow nor shut his eyes The music went on sweetly as before He asked the robber. "Why does your arrow stop?" Balya answered, "At the sight of your peace" Narada had transformed Balya Was the change true or false?

Who is to decide that a man is bad? Even if a really bad person appears before you, think that he is the Lord Himself Even the villain will become a saint Then, are we to imagine such falsehood? But I say, who can be certain that the man is wicked? Some say, "Good people, being good themselves, see nothing but goodness around them. But in fact, this is not true." Should the world then accept as true only what you see, and nothing else? Are we then to suppose that

it is only the bad people who have the means to take the full measure of creation? Why not say that there is nothing wrong with creation, but it appears bad to you because of badness in you? Look, creation is but a mirror. What you are and what you bring to this mirror, the image of this you see in the world. It is the eye of the beholder that determines the form of the world Therefore, approach all creation with the feeling that it is good, that it is pure. Carry the same *bhavana* to all your ordinary actions Then you will see a miraculous change This is what the Lord means us to understand when He says :—

"*yatkaroshi yadasnaasi yajjuhoshi dadaasi yat*
yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kurushva madarpanam"

"Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever rites or austerities you perform, whatever you give, do it, O son of Kunti, as an offering to me"

What you do, such as it is, dedicate it all to the Lord

When I was a child, my mother used to tell me a story. It is a funny little story, but it contains a profound secret There was a girl who was resolved that everything she did should go to Krishna After cleaning the oven in the kitchen with a mixture of clay and cowdung, she made what was left into a ball and threw it out, saying, "*Krishnaarpanamastu*," "May Krishna accept it" What happened was that the ball of cowdung used to rise into the air and, flying into the temple, stick on the face of the image of the Lord The priest, poor fellow, got tired cleaning up the image He did not know what to do At last he discovered that this was all due to the girl As long as the girl was alive, the image could not be kept clean One day the girl fell sick. She was about to die She dedicated her death also to Krishna The image in the temple fell to pieces The heavenly chariot came to fetch her—but this too she dedicated to Krishna The chariot dashed against the temple

and was smashed up Even heaven is reduced to nothing before the thought of Krishna.

The meaning of it all is that whatever actions we do, whether good or bad, a new dimension of power enters into them the moment we surrender them to the Lord. The grains of maize are reddish yellow in colour, but when maize is parched in sand, what good popcorn it becomes! What a difference between the dainty popcorn, white and soft, and the hard grain! But there is no doubt that the one has become the other, and the change is due to the fire Likewise, if you grind this hard grain in a mill, it becomes soft flour. As contact with fire makes it flowerlike, and grinding in the mill makes it into soft flour, so even the smallest actions are transformed when they are passed through the process of dedication to God By this *bhavana*, this feeling, their value is raised Do not despise the common *gudel* flower, the *bel* leaf, the tender *tulasi* leaf and the *dub* grass—

"Tuka says, by association with Vitthal, sweetness comes to it"

Associate everything with the Lord, and then taste it afresh Where is the spice to equal Rama? Add this divine *masala* to everything you do, so it will become beautiful and tasty.

During the evening worship at the temple, when the smoke of incense rises, lamps are lit, and the burning camphor is waved before the image, we feel indeed the presence of the Lord before our eyes All day He was awake, and now it is time for Him to go to sleep The devotees put Him to sleep with the lullaby—

"Sweetly sleep, my Gopala, my sweet one, sleep"

A sceptic asks, "Does your God sleep too?"

My dear man, what does God not do? If the Lord does not sleep and wake, can the stone then sleep and wake? My friend, it is the Lord that sleeps and wakes, it is He

that eats and drinks. As the day dawns, Tulasidas wakes the Lord, sings and prays to the Lord.

> "Wake up, O Lord of the Raghus, my child, the birds are singing in the woods"

Tulasidas looks on all his brothers and sisters, all the men and women in the world, as Ramachandra Himself and says to them, "My Ramas, my kings, arise," What a beautiful idea! For a contrast, let us take a hostel where they wake up the boys, shouting, "Get up, you sleepy-heads" Is this rude shouting in harmony with the auspicious morning hour? Young Rama is asleep in Visvamitra's *asram*. And this is how, according to Valmiki, the teacher awakens the pupil,

> "*Raama iti madhuraam vaanim visvaamitro abhyabha-ashata*
> *uttishtha narasaardauula puurvaa sandhyaa pravartate*"

Thus, in a sweet voice, Visvamitra says, "Rama, my child, the sky is brightening in the east, get up, O tiger among men" What a difference between the *asram* and the modern hostel! Why should the poor sleeping lad feel it is his foe through seven births that wakes him up? First whisper, then speak a little louder, but never be rough or rude If he does not wake up, try again after ten minutes If he does not get up in time today, be sure he will do so tomorrow Sing to him songs of the sunrise, songs of praise You may think that waking up a sleeper is an ordinary job, but we can fill even that with poetry, with feeling and beauty. We should wake him up as if he were God asleep Yes, we should be gentle in rousing the image of God Waking up a sleeper is also an art

Inform all your actions with this idea Indeed, this idea is essential to teaching What are children but the images of God? The teacher should be filled with the *bhavana* that he is rendering service to these gods If he did, he

would never bawl out at them, "Get out! Stand up for an hour! Hold out your hand! How dirty your clothes are! Go and clean your nose!" He would, instead, gently wipe the child's nose, he would wash and mend his clothes. If the teacher does so, what a change there will be! Whoever heard of any good coming out of beating and cruelty? Students too should regard their teachers with the same divine *bhavana*. Teachers should look on their pupils as gods, and so too should the pupils regard their teachers. If this mutual *bhavana* is established, how brightly would knowledge shine! Indeed, the boys are the Lord, and so is the teacher! If only the pupils feel, "This is not just a schoolmaster, this is the Lord Siva Himself. We are drinking in the nectar of His teaching, let us enlighten our understanding by service to Him," we can well imagine how they would behave towards him.

(47) No fear of sin

Once the *bhavana* settles in the mind that the Lord is a hining presence everywhere, the ethics of our mutual rela-ions will spring of its own accord in the heart. There is no ieed to look for it in books. Then all defects will vanish, in will flee, and the darkness of evil disappear.

Tukaram has said —

"Be free and bold, take now the divine name of Vitthal,
He will come to you, and sin will cease to be."

Well, then, you are free to sin if you wish! I shall see whether you get tired of sinning first, or *Ramanama* gets tired of destroying your sins. Which is the sin powerful enough to stand against the Lord's name? "Sin as much as you like", a charter of freedom is given to you. Let the Lord's name and your sins fight it out. My dear man, the Name has the power to reduce to ashes in a moment all the sins not merely of the present life, but of countless *janmas*. No matter how ancient the darkness is in a cave,

it flees when a match is struck. The darkness becomes light. The older the sin, the more quickly it is destroyed, because it is old and must perish. It is old fuel that burns to ashes soon.

No sin can stand near *Ramanama*. Do not children say that ghosts vanish when you say "Rama"? When I was young, we used to challenge each other to go to the burning ground at dead of night and drive in a peg there. There would be snakes and thorns on the way, and darkness all round, but nothing daunted me. No ghost ever appeared. Ghosts are creations of the mind, why then would we see them? Where did the boy of ten gain the courage to visit the cremation ground? From *Ramanama*. This is the glory of the Lord who is the image of truth. If you have the *bhavana* that the Lord is always by your side, then you, His servant, will know no fear even if the whole world turns upside down. Which demon can eat you up? The demon may eat and digest the body, but not the truth. There is no power on earth that can destroy truth. Not for a moment can sin stand before the name of the Lord. Therefore turn your heart towards God. Attain His grace. Dedicate all actions to Him. Become altogether His. If you strengthen the *bhavana* that all actions should be offered up to the Lord, this sordid life will become divine, the commonplace will become beautiful.

(48) Little but sweet

"*Patram pushpam phalam toyam*," a leaf, a flower, a fruit, a little water, whatever it is, *bhakti* makes the offering complete. The question is not how much you give, but with what *bhavana*. Once I was talking to a professor about a problem in teaching. We happened to differ. Finally he said, "Sir, I've been at this job for eighteen years." When, instead of convincing me, he cited his long experience, I said in fun, "Sir, if for eighteen years a bullock is yoked

to an oil mill, does it become an engineer ?" It is one thing to go round and round blindly like a bullock and quite another to understand the science of engineering A man may carry for years the burden of teaching and yet not understand the art of teaching The knowledge that a scientist can acquire in six months, a porter cannot in eighteen years The professor might have grown grey teaching, but that proves nothing So also, there is no value in the quantity of the stuff you pile up before the Lord There, the question is not about size or shape or price, but only about the *bhavana* , not what or how much we offer, but how, in what spirit, we offer it There are only 700 *slokas* in the *Gita* there are other works with as many as 10,000 But we cannot say that because a thing is big, it is therefore better What we should look for is the power, the energy it has The number of actions in life is not important Even a single action performed in a spirit of dedication to the Lord will bring us the fullness of experience Sometimes in one holy moment an experience comes to us which in the ordinary course we cannot acquire in a stretch of years.

The essence of the matter is that, if we give over to the Lord all our actions, then life acquires strength and skill from this, and *moksha* is within our grasp To perform action, without renouncing the fruit, to surrender it to the Lord, this is *raja-yoga* This takes us a step beyond *karma-yoga*. *Karma-yoga* says, "Perform action Renounce the fruit , do not desire it" And there it stops *Raja-yoga* says, "Do not give up the fruit, but surrender all your actions to the Lord. They are flowers , they are means to carry you heavenward , offer them to the image of the Lord With action on one side and devotion on the other, combining both *karma* and *bhakti*, make your life more and more beautiful. Do not renounce the fruits They are not to be thrown away, but dedicated to the Lord" The fruit that

is cut off from action in *karma-yoga*, is re-united with it in *raja-yoga*. When you sow the seed, you do not throw it away What you sow, be it ever so little, will increase and yield infinite fruit What you throw away is wholly lost. The action dedicated to the Lord is like a seed sown. It fills our life with endless joy and holiness

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CHAPTER X

CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE GLORY

(49) The first half of the Gita : a retrospect

Friends, we have completed the first half of the *Gita*. Before we proceed to the second, it is good to look back In the First Chapter it was made clear that the *Gita* aims at destroying delusion and making us pursue *svadharma*. We saw in the Second Chapter the basic principles of life, the way of action and the image of the *sthitaprajna* (the steadfast seer). *Karma*, *vikarma* and *akarma* were described in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Chapters *Karma* means the performance of *svadharma* , *vikarma* means the inward action which is performed to support the outward action performed as *svadharma* When *karma* and *vikarma* become one, the mind and heart are purified and cleansed, the cravings we have acquired weaken, passions are stilled, feelings of difference vanish and then the state of *akarma* is reached This state of *akarma*, it has been said, is of two kinds In one, you feel, though you work day and night, that you are not working at all , in the other, though you work not at all, you work unceasingly Though these two kinds appear different, they are in their perfection one. Though the names *karma-yoga* and *sannyasa* are different, the truth at the heart of both is the same The state of *akarma* is the final stage, the ultimate goal This state is called "*moksha*" Thus in the first five chapters the philosophy of life has been fully set out

After this, from the Sixth Chapter onwards, are described the more important methods of *vikarma* useful for cleansing the mind from within and attaining the ideal state of *akarma*. The Sixth Chapter describes the means to one-pointedness, —meditation, and as aids to meditation, practice (*abhyasa*) and detachment (*vairagya*) The Seventh Chapter teaches

us the noble and comprehensive means of devotion (*bhakti*). Go to the Lord with love ; go in search of knowledge ; go seeking the good of the world , go for your personal need— go for whatever reason, only reach His presence once. give this Chapter the title of *prapatti-yoga*, the *yoga* that impels you to surrender to the Lord. This surrender has to be constantly practised , the *yoga* of Constancy (*satatya-yoga*) is found in the Eighth Chapter You will not find these names in the books, but they have been useful to me. *Satatya-yoga* means continuing one's *sadhana* to the end of one's life The road that we have set out on, we should tread without stopping till we reach the end. There is no hope of ever reaching the goal if we walk how and when we like We should never grow disgusted or despondent and complain, " How long are we to go on doing this *sadhana* ? " Till we attain the fruit, the *sadhana* should continue without pause.

Having introduced us to *satatya-yoga*, the *yoga* of Constancy, the Lord, in the Ninth Chapter, teaches us a truth commonplace in itself, but capable of transforming the whole quality of life—and this is *raja-yoga* The Ninth Chapter tells us to dedicate to Krishna all that we do from moment to moment In this one truth is concentrated all arts and skills, all *karma* and *vikarma* All practices, all methods of action lie hidden in the *yoga* of dedication. This practice of dedication is *raja-yoga* , all practices find fulfilment here. This comprehensive and all-powerful *sadhana* of dedication may seem easy and commonplace, but it is in reality hard. This *sadhana* is easy because anyone, from a rustic to a scholar, can perform it without much effort each in his own house and station But easy though it is, it requires extraordinary merit to pursue it

" Through much practice in virtue
I have come to love Vitthal."

It is only when the merits of many births accumulate that our hearts are drawn towards God. The most trivial things bring tears to our eyes, but not the name of God. What is to be done? In one sense, as the saints say, this *sadhana* is easy. But in another sense, it is also difficult, and it has become all the more difficult in modern times

Today, the film of materialism obscures our wisdom. Instead of beginning with an invocation to Ganesa, we begin with the question, "Does God exist anywhere?" And no one of course sees Him anywhere Life is full of passion and greed, full of distortions The best of our philosophers today cannot rise beyond the thought of finding food for everybody. This is no fault of theirs, because as things are at present, many lack even food. Today's main problem is food Our best brains are busy solving it Sayanacharya, the commentator of the Vedas, says, "*bubhukshamaanah rudrarupena avatishthate*"—"hungry He appears in the form of Rudra."

Hungry people are *avatars* of Rudra To appease their hunger, many philosophical and political theories have arisen. We cannot lift our head a moment from these problems. All our *bhagiratha-prayatna*, all our heroic efforts, today, are towards this end of enabling people to eat their food in peace and comfort. If in such a strange social order, even something as straight and easy as dedication to the Lord becomes very difficult, what is there to wonder at? What then is one to do? How to master the *yoga* of dedication to the Lord, how to make it easy—this is what we are going to see in the Tenth Chapter.

(50) An easy way to learn to see God

The methods we employ to teach children how to read, these same methods this Chapter employs to teach us to see God everywhere We teach children the alphabet in two different ways One method is to introduce the letters

by writing them big and, after they have learnt to recognise them, to reduce their size It is the same ' A ' and the same ' B ', only, the letters were big then and are small now. This is one method The other method is to teach the easy letters first and the complicated ones later In just these ways we should learn to see God First, we should see His presence clearly in the big things. The Lord manifest in mighty natural objects like the sea and the mountain catches our eyes at once Once we have learnt to recognise the Supreme in these vast manifestations, once we have seen these mighty forms of God, we shall recognise that every drop of water and every grain of sand is filled with the same God There is no difference in meaning between the huge ' A ' and the small ' A '—between the gross and the subtle. This is one way In the second method we first recognise the supreme forms that are directly and easily seen, and then go on to more complicated forms When the Lord is present in a natural way in a person, we recognise Him easily. For example, the divinity manifest in Rama easily impresses itself on our mind Rama is an easy letter to learn ; in Him, we see God clearly But what about Ravana ? This is not a simple letter but a combination , not pure gold but an alloy Ravana's penance and merit are indeed great ; but they are mixed with cruelty. First learn the simple letter, Rama Compassionate, loving and lovable, Rama is an easy God to know and make our own But to recognise the God who is in Ravana, it takes some time First the simple, then the complicated letter. We should train ourselves first to see the Lord in good people. and later on in those not so good The immense Being which we behold in the ocean is also present in the little drop of water The Lord who is in Ramachandra is in Ravana too What is found in the gross is present in the subtle , what is found in the simple is present in the complex By these two methods we should learn to read the book of this world

This vast creation is the Lord's Book Because a thick veil covers our eyes it looks as though the book is closed In this Book of Creation the Lord is written down everywhere in beautiful letters But we do not understand it There is a big obstacle to our seeing the Lord That is, man does not recognise the Lord in the ordinary simple forms that are near him , the distant dazzling forms are too overpowering If you tell him, "See the Lord in your mother," he would say, "Is the Lord so simple and innocent ?" But if the Supreme Lord appears in all His splendour, can you endure the sight ? Kunti wished to see the distant sun face to face, near and direct , but as he approached she could not bear the heat. If the Lord comes and stands before us in the fullness of His power, we cannot stand it , if He comes in the gentle homely form of one's mother, He fails to command our respect Rich sweets are indigestible , plain milk is unpalatable These are symptoms of misfortune and death. It is this sick mind that stands as an obstacle to our seeing the Lord It is essential to get rid of this state of mind. First let us read the Lord that is near, concrete, easy , and then go on to the subtle and the complicated forms

(51) God in human form

The familiar form in which God first appears to us is our own mother The Veda says, "*mati devo bhava*" "Let your mother be your God" Who but the mother does the newborn child see ? The Lord Himself stands there as the embodiment of tenderness It is this worship of the mother that we would carry to love of country when we sing " *vande mataram*" and then to love of the universal Mother Earth. And yet in the beginning the first image of the Lord Supreme that comes before the child is the mother It is not impossible to attain *moksha* through the worship of the mother What is worship of the mother but worship of the Lord as love incarnate—the mother is only the occasion and the symbol.

was once playing with children Some grown-up people who observed Samarth, the saint, romping with the children, were surprised One of them asked, " What has come over you to-day ?" Samarth answered,

" Those who remained young became great,
Those who grew up became great rogues "

As one grows up one sprouts horns, one develops self-will. Then one never thinks of God ! The hearts of little children are unspoilt, their minds pure We say to a child, " Don't tell lies." He asks, " What is a lie ?" Then we expound to him the doctrine that statement must correspond to fact The boy is puzzled and begins to wonder whether there is another way of speaking than saying what is How can one say what is not ? This is like telling one to call a square a square and not a circle All this only surprises the child What are children ? Images of purity, of God-head. Grown-ups teach them all wrong The truth is if we cannot see the Lord in mother, father, teacher, saint and child, in what other form can we see Him ? There is no nobler form of God than these Learn first these gentle and familiar forms of the Lord In these the Lord is written in bold, clear letters

(52) God in Creation—some examples

First let us learn to see God in serene and holy human forms. In the same way let us see Him first in the sublime and beautiful aspects of nature Look at the dawn, the divine glow that precedes sunrise The *rishis* that sing the glories of this goddess dance with joy Beautiful words spring from their hearts " Oh Usha ! You are the divine messenger sent to us by the Lord You are bathed in dew drops You are the banner of immortality " The Vedic *rishi* says, " You bring us the message of the Lord If, even after seeing you, I do not see and understand Him, who else can make Him

of acceptance and indeed holy During the last moments they pour a few drops of Ganga water into the mouth of the dying man What are these drops, but the Lord Himself entering the body Regard the Ganga as God , it is His grace that flows as this water Mother Ganga washes off and carries away in her course all the uncleanness of our mind and body If God is not manifest to us in Mother Ganga, where else shall we see Him ? The sun, the rivers, the mighty ocean tossing up into tumultuous waves, all these are forms of God.

And the wind ! Whence it comes and where it goes, we do not know It is the messenger of the Lord In our India a great wind blows from the Himalayas and another from the mighty ocean This purifying wind touches our heart. It awakens us It whispers in our ears But who listens to its message ? If the jailor does not give us a letter with four lines scribbled on it we feel sore You poor wretch, what is there so precious in that letter ? The wind brings to you every moment the loving message of the Lord , listen to it

And the animals that serve us ! Mother Cow—how full of tenderness and attachment she is, how loving ! How eagerly cows come running back up hill and down dale to their calves after going grazing all day long The Vedic *rishis*, seeing the gurgling rivers bringing pure water from the mountains, think of the heavy-uddered cows returning lowing to their calves The *rishi* says to the river, " Oh Goddess, you who bring holy, sweet and clean water, you are like the cow bringing milk to her calf As the cow will not stay in the forest, so you cannot stay in the mountains You come running fast to meet your thirsty children "

" *vaasraa iva dhenavah syandamaanaah* "

In the form of the loving cow, the Lord stands at our door.

And then the horse ! How beautiful, how true, how faithful! How dearly the Arabs love their horses? Don't you know the story of the Arab and his horse? He was driven by circumstances to sell his horse, and he made up his mind to do so. Carrying in his hand a purse full of gold coins, the price of the animal, he enters the stable. The moment he sees the noble and loving eyes of the horse, he flings the purse down exclaiming, "Even if I have to die, I will not sell my horse. Come what may. Let me perish of hunger if I must. God will help me" How his skin tingles when we pat him ! And what a lovely mane he has ! There is no end to his merits What is there in a bicycle ? Look after a horse well and he will be ready to give up his life for you He will be your friend and stay with you. A friend of mine was learning to ride. The horse used to throw him off. He said, "The horse will not let me keep my seat." I said to him, "Do you only attempt to ride the horse, or do you also feed him and look after him ? When someone else serves him, how can you ride him ? Feed him yourself and give him water, rub him down and then try to ride him" He did so and said to me after a few days, "The horse doesn't throw me off now." The horse is a form of the Lord And would He throw off a servant ? The horse yielded to his devotion. The horse wants to know whether you are a devotee or not The Lord Krishna would rub down the horse Himself, and feed him out of his yellow silk garment If there is a puddle or a ditch to cross, the bicycle stops, but the horse jumps over. This beautiful and loving animal is a form of the Lord

And the Lion ! When I was in Baroda I would get up in the morning listening to its majestic roar. The majestic beauty of his voice thrilled my heart. The magnificent sound proceeding from his heart was like the sound one hears in the inmost shrine of a temple The noble courage, the fearless beauty of his expression ! The regal gait and mien !

His flowing mane is the *chamara*, the royal insignia, provided by nature for the King of the forest In a garden in Baroda there was a lion He was not free, he went round and round in a cage But there was not a trace of cruelty in his eyes. There was compassion in his expression and his look It looked as though he had no thought for the world and was absorbed in his own meditation In fact, the lion is a holy manifestation of the Lord I read, when I was a child, the story of "Androcles and the Lion" What a wonderful story ! The famished lion, remembering Androcles' kindness, becomes his friend and licks his feet What, does it mean ? Androcles had seen in the lion the Lord Himself There is always a lion near the Lord Siva The lion is a creature of divine glory

And is the tiger inferior ? The power of the Lord shines through him It is not impossible to make friends with him. Bhagavan Panini, seated in the forest, was instructing his pupils Just then a tiger came along The boys got frightened and shouted "Tiger, Tiger !" Panini said calmly, "Well, what does "*vyaaghra*" (tiger) mean ? "*Vyaajighrati iti vyaaghrah*" That is a *vyaaghra* whose sense of smell is acute. Though the boys were afraid of the animal, to Panini it was a harmless delightful word Seeing the tiger, he began to explain the etymology of the word The tiger ate Panini up. But what if it did ? The tiger liked the sweet smell of his body, and so tore it and ate it up But Panini did not run away, because he was a worshipper of *sabda-brahman* (God as the Word) For him all things had become one In the tiger too he recognised God as the Word Because of this greatness, he is reverently called "Bhagavan Panini" in the commentaries when his name occurs They express their deep gratitude to him for opening with the instrument of knowledge the eyes of the blind world—

> "*ajnaanaandhasya lokasya jnaanaanjanasalaakayaa*
> *chakshurunmilitam yena tasmai paaninaye namah*"

Thus Bhagavan Panini sees in the tiger the vision of the Lord. Jnanadev says—

> " Though to our home comes heaven, or upon us springs the tiger,
> Never let there be a break in the consciousness of Self."

Such was the state of Maharshi Panini He had realised that the tiger was a divine manifestation.

So, too, with the serpent People are much afraid of the snake But the snake is, in its stern regard for cleanliness, like a brahmin How clean ! How beautiful ! It cannot bear dirt You may come across any number of dirty brahmins, but have you ever seen a dirty snake ? It is like a *rishi* living in solitude Pure, bright and lovely, it shines like a garland; why fear it ? Our ancestors laid down ways of worshipping it You may, if you like, say that Hinduism is full of all sorts of superstitions, but worship of the snake is an integral part of it In my childhood I used to draw with turmeric the figure of a snake for my mother to worship I would tell my mother, " But there are nice pictures for sale in the shop, mother " She would answer, " That's no good. We want none of that Only the figure drawn by my child is good enough " And to it worship would be offered Is this madness ? But think a little In the month of *sravan* (July-August), it comes to us as a guest In the rainy season, the poor creature's house is filled with water. What could it do then ? This *rishi*, who lives in some remote and lonely spot, comes and lies down under the gable or between the logs, wishing not to give us trouble It takes up very little room But we run after it with a stick When at his need a guest comes to our house, is this the way to welcome him ? It is said of Saint Francis that, when he saw a snake in the forest, he would welcome it lovingly, saying, " Come, brother, come !" And the snake would play in his lap and crawl up and down his body Don't think this is fiction.

Love certainly has such power We speak of the venom of the snake, but have men less of it ? The snake stings now and then ; and it is never the first to hurt Nine out of ten snakes are not poisonous They guard your fields They live on the many kinds of vermin that destroy your crop This helpful creature, so clean, so powerful, this lover of solitude, is an image of the Lord Snakes are connected in one way or another with all our deities Ganesa wears one round his waist Siva wraps one round his neck And Vishnu sleeps on one as his bed Realise the secret, the charm of it. The meaning of it all is that the Lord's form is manifested through the snake. Recognise the Lord who dwells in the serpent

(53) God in Creation—some more examples

How many such examples shall I give ? All I am doing is to use the imagination The whole essence of the *Ramayana* lies in this beautiful power. The love of father and son, the love of mother and child, the love of brothers, the love of husband and wife—all this is found in the *Ramayana.* But it is not because of these things that the *Ramayana* is dear to me It is dear to me because Rama made friends with the monkeys People today say that these monkeys belonged to the Naga tribe It is the job of the historians to research into the things of the past. I have nothing against their labours, but if Rama made friends with real monkeys, what is there impossible in that ? The *Ramatva,* the Rama-ness of Rama, his charm, lies precisely here , that he made friends with monkeys

Such too was the relation between Krishna and the cows The ground of Krishna-worship is this imagination Look at any picture of Krishna , you will see him surrounded by cows Gopalakrishna, Krishna the cowherd ! If we take the cows away from Krishna, what is left of Krishna ? If from Rama we remove the monkeys, how much of Rama is

there even in Rama ? Rama saw the Supreme in the monkeys too and became their friend and comrade This is the key to the *Ramayana* Without this key you would miss its beauty The love of father and son, of mother and child, you will find elsewhere too, but this union, this sweet friendship between *nara* and *vanara*, between man and monkey, this you will find nowhere else The Lord in the monkey, the *Ramayana* has made its own

At sight of the monkeys, the *rishis* were filled with joy. From Ramtek to the banks of the Krishna those monkeys wandered and played, jumping from branch to branch, without once touching the ground When the *rishis*, with their delicate sympathies, saw the dense forests and the monkeys at play, poetry welled up in their hearts, they were thrilled. The *Upanishads*, in describing the eyes of *brahman*, compare them to the eyes of a monkey The monkey's eyes are very restless They look on all sides at once The eyes of *brahman* should be like this too It would not do for the Lord to have His eyes fixed It is all right for you and me to sit in meditation with eyes shut , but if the Lord is lost in meditation, what would happen to the world ? So *rishis* see in monkeys the eyes of the Lord who watches all creatures Learn to see the Lord in monkeys

And then the peacock ! Peacocks are rare in Maharashtra, but they abound in Gujerat When I was in Gujerat, I used to walk some ten miles daily, and saw many peacocks When clouds gather and it is about to rain and the sky darkens, the peacocks begin to call You will understand it only when you have once heard for yourself the piercing plaint drawn out from the depths of its heart The structure of our music is built on this note of the peacock, which is our *shadjama svara*—"*shadjam rauti*" This primary note we got from the peacock Then, from it, we derived the other notes Its face turned upwards to the clouds, its majestic

feathers spread out like an umbrella, as it hears the roaring clouds—what is man's finery before this beauty ? Kings and emperors too deck themselves elaborately, but how can they compete with the glory of the peacock's tail ? Those thousand eyes, that many-coloured brightness, the marvellously soft and lovely texture, the consummate workmanship ! Look at this tail for a while, and see in it the presence of the Lord. All creation is decked out in this way Wherever we turn, the Lord stands there for us to see, but we who do not see Him are wretched Tukaram says :—

> "To the Lord, all times and places are auspicious ; only the wretched knows scarcity"

To the saints there is prosperity always, but we unfortunate ones are troubled by famine everywhere

The worship of Agni is described in the Vedas. Agni is Narayana What a brightly shining form he has ! When two sticks are rubbed against each other, he shines forth. Where was he hiding before ? What heat, what light ! The first sounds of the Veda emerged in the worship of Agni—

> "*agnimile purohitam yajnasya devam ritvijam*
> *hotaaram ratnadhaatamam*"

Look at that fire in whose worship the Vedas begin. When I see its flames, I am reminded of the excitement and agitation of our human souls Whether it be the domestic or the forest fire, its flames are never steady. The man of detachment has no home Wherever those flames are found, they set off excitement They are ever in a state of agitation They yearn to rise high Scientists would say that they flicker because of ether, or because of the pressure of the wind But so far as I am concerned, I see in the fire its eagerness to join the Supreme Being up there, the ocean of light, *Suryanarayana*, and hence its restless, perpetual upward movement. From birth to death without a pause, it leaps and runs. The sun is the whole of which the flames are parts The part

yearns to rejoin the whole ; it is only with extinction that the excitement ends, not before It never considers how far away from the sun it is. All it knows is how to rise above the earth to its utmost capacity. Is this mere fire, is it not *vairagya*, freedom from attachment, shining as fire ? That is why the first sound of the Veda is "*agnimile.*"

And how can one forget the cuckoo ? Whom does it call ? In the summer, when rivers and tanks have gone dry, tender young leaves sprout on the trees. It seems to ask, "Who gave this beauty to the trees ? Where is the giver of these gifts ?" How sweet, how eager is the call ! In the Hindu religion there is a *vrata*, an observance, relating to the cuckoo's voice Women take a vow not to eat any food until they have heard the cuckoo's call. This *vrata* teaches us to see the Supreme manifest in the voice of the cuckoo The cuckoo calls so sweetly that it seems to be chanting some *Upanishad*. One hears its voice, but does not see it. The English poet Wordsworth sings,—

"O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice ?

. . . . .

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green ;
And thou wert still a hope, a love ,
Still longed for, never seen "

While the great English poet wanders in search of the cuckoo, the ordinary women in Indian homes eat no food till they see it This *kokila-vrata* confers on Indian women the status of poets In the cuckoo that calls so sweetly bringing such joy, we see the Lord in His beauty.

If the cuckoo is beautiful, is the crow ugly ? No, the crow too is worthy of respect To me it is very dear, with its deep black colour, and its deep strong voice Do you think its voice raucous ? I don't , its voice too is sweet As it comes

near, beating its wings, how lovely it looks ? Does it not capture the hearts of little children ? The little child refuses to take food, cooped up in the house One has to take him out into the open yard and show him crows and sparrows before he can be persuaded to eat Is the child mad that he so loves the crow ? Far from it, he is full of wisdom At once the child becomes one with the Lord in the form of the crow The mother may pour curds or milk on the rice, or cover it with sugar—nothing pleases the child His pleasure is in the crow that flaps its wings and cocks its head

All the fables of Aesop are based on the child's lively interest in the objects of creation Aesop saw the Lord everywhere Among the books I love I should give first place to Aesop's Fables , I shall never forget it Aesop's kingdom is not peopled only with human beings with two hands and two feet In it, foxes, dogs, crows, deer, hares, tortoises, snakes, worms, all talk and laugh It is a huge conference The whole of creation speaks to Aesop He had the divine vision The *Ramayana* too is based on this truth, on this vision Tulsidas describes the *lila* of Rama as a child Rama is playing in the courtyard A crow comes near and Rama approaches it slowly to catch it The crow jumps back At last Rama gets tired But then an idea comes to him He takes a sweet in his hand and draws nearer to it As he stretches out his hand further, the crow comes closer Tulsidas gives a page to this description , because the crow is the Lord The same divinity is present in the crow as well as in Rama The coming together of Rama and the crow is the union of the Supreme with the Supreme

(54) In villains too

The truth of the matter is that God is present in all the forms of creation As holy rivers, mighty mountains, the majestic ocean, the tender-hearted cow, the noble steed, the magni-

ficent lion, the sweet-voiced cuckoo, the beautiful peacock, the pure hermit snake, the crow flapping its wings, the restless flame, the still star,—as all this, He is present. We should train our eyes to see Him. We should first learn the big letters and then the small ones; we should first learn the easy letters and then the complex ones Until we master the complex letters, there is no progress in learning to read. At every step, in word after word, the complex letters occur. We should learn to see the Lord who dwells in evil persons. We understand Rama, but we should learn to understand Ravana too. We understand Prahlada, but we should learn to understand Hiranyakasipu too. The *Vedas* say,—

"*namonamah stenaanaam pataye namonamah*
namah punjishthebhyo namo nishaadebhyah
brahma daashaa brahma daasaa brahmaiva ime kitavaah"

"Salutations to the prince of robbers! Salutations to the cruel ones, to the doers of harm! The thugs, the thieves, the robbers, all are *brahman* Salutations to them all!"

What does this mean? It means that, now that we have mastered the easy letters, we can proceed to the difficult ones. Carlyle has written a book on "Hero Worship" There he describes Napoleon as a hero, as a manifestation of God. What is found there is not the pure Supreme, but a mixture—but even this should be understood. So in Tulsidas, Ravana is called Rama's enemy-*bhakta* Yes, the nature and conduct of this *bhakta* is rather peculiar By contact with fire, the foot swells up in blisters, but the swelling subsides when a hot fomentation is applied It is one and the same fire, but it manifests itself differently in different circumstances Though manifested differently in Rama and in Ravana, it is the same Supreme that is present in both

Gross and subtle, pure and mixed, simple and complex—learn all this and realise in the end that there is no place where

the Lord is not. In every atom He alone is present. From the ant to the universe, He spreads. The Lord who cares equally for all, the compassionate one who is all knowledge, tenderness, skill, holiness and beauty—He stands on all sides everywhere

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CHAPTER XI

THE VISION OF THE COSMIC FORM

(55) Arjuna's eagerness to see it

Brothers, we learned last week how to recognise the Supreme who pervades the countless objects of the Universe, and how to make this vast spectacle our own How to see God first in the gross then in the subtle, first in the simple then in the complex and thus to see Him in all things, how to realise Him; how through practice day and night, to come to feel that the whole world is oneself—all this we saw in the last Chapter

Now we turn to the Eleventh Chapter In this Chapter the Lord reveals His visible form, and so His grace Arjuna said, "Lord, I wish to behold with these eyes your complete form, the form in which is manifest all the power of your glory" What Arjuna prayed for was *visvarupa-darsana*, the vision of the cosmic form

We use words like *visva* and *jagat*, the universe and the world This world is a small part of the universe And even this small part we are unable to understand If we think of the whole universe, this world which seemed so vast now seems tiny If we look up at the night sky we see innumerable orbs Do we know the real nature of those festoons of light hung up in the heavens, those lovely little flowers, those millions of twinkling stars? Each of those little stars is immensely big Each is big enough to contain countless suns They are shining spheres of elements burning. Who can count them? They are beyond measure or limit. Even the naked eye sees thousands of them When we look through a telescope millions become visible With more powerful telescopes many more can be seen and it will be difficult to say where or how it will all end Of this infinite creation spreading above, below and on all sides of us, a tiny bit is what we call our world And how huge even this world appears to us!

This vast creation is but one aspect of the Lord's form. Now let us look at another aspect of it, that is, Time If we consider the past, our knowledge of history goes back at most to ten thousand years Of the time before that, we know nothing. While historical time is of the order of ten thousand years, our individual life's length is not even a hundred years Time stretches without beginning or end. It is impossible to measure or count the time that is past It is equally impossible to conceive the time that is to come. Just as our world is so tiny as against the vastness of space, our 10,000 years of history is as nothing in the infinity of Time, the past is without a beginning and the future without an end And as for this brief present, even as we are speaking, it slips into the past Even as we try to describe where the present is, it has become the past This so elusive present is all that belongs to us. I am speaking now, but as the words come out of my mouth they have already joined the past Thus this great river of time flows continuously forward We know neither its source nor its end, we see only a little part of the flow in the middle

If we look at creation in these two ways, as a tremendous expanse of Space and a tremendous flood of Time, we cannot see the limits of it, however much we stretch our imagination. Arjuna conceived in his heart a desire to behold the form of the Supreme, to see all at once the omnipresent Lord, who pervades all Time, past, present and future, and all Space, here, above, below and everywhere. From this desire springs the Eleventh Chapter.

Arjuna was very dear to the Lord How dear? So dear that naming in the Tenth Chapter the forms in which he should be contemplated, the Lord says, "Among the Pandavas think of me as Arjuna" Sri Krishna says, "*paandavaanaam dhananjayah*" Where can we find a stronger infatuation? This shows how love can make one mad. The Lord's love for Arjuna knew no bounds. The Eleventh Chapter is the

gracious fulfilment of that love Arjuna's desire to see the divine form, the Lord satisfied by endowing him with divine vision He gave him the grace of His love.

(56) The full vision in the small image

In this Chapter is found a beautiful and entrancing description of the divine form Though all this is true, I am not particularly drawn to this *visvarupa*. I am quite satisfied with a small image. I have learned to enjoy the sweetness of the small and common but beautiful image before me. The Lord is not cut up into little parts. It does not seem to me that the form of the Lord that we can see is only a part of Him and that the rest is left out ; but I see that the Lord who pervades this vast universe is present in His fullness in the little image, in the grain of sand. There is no question of greater or less. The sweetness of the ocean of nectar is found in every drop of it I have got a tiny little drop of *amrta* (nectar of immortality) ; I feel that I should enjoy for ever the sweetness of that drop. I chose the example of *amrta*, and not milk or water, on purpose A cup of milk is just as sweet as a pitcher of it ; but though the taste is the same, the nutritive power is different. But there is no difference between a drop of *amrta* and a cup of it. Not only the sweetness but the nourishment is the same in the sea of nectar and in a drop of it. If we but drink one drop of it, we gain the fullness of *amrtatva*, immortality.

In the same way, the same beauty and holiness that there is in the cosmic form of the Lord is also present in the little image. If I am not able to recognise wheat when I am shown a handful of it, of what use is it to put before me a sackful ! If I do not recognise Him in the little models before me, how can I recognise Him in all His vastness ? Does size make any difference ? To understand the small form is to understand the big. Hence I feel no desire that the Lord should show to me His cosmic form Nor have I, like Arjuna,

the right to ask for it Moreover, it is not as if what is seen by me is only a part of the cosmic form If someone brought a part torn off from a picture, we cannot imagine from it the whole picture But the Lord is not made up of parts in this way ; one part of Him cannot be cut off from the rest Even in a little image, the whole of that infinite Supreme is contained What is the difference between a small photograph and a big one Everything that is found in the big one is found in the small too The small one is not a portion, a fragment, of the big A letter means the same whether it is written big or it is written small

This is the meaning behind image-worship Many people have opposed image-worship Foreigners, and even thinkers of our own country, have found fault with it But the more I think of it, the more I realise its beauty What is the meaning of it ? Image-worship is the *vidya*, the art, of experiencing the whole universe in a little object Is it wrong to learn the *vidya* which helps us to see the whole world in a little village ? This is not mere imagination, it is a matter of direct experience What there is in the cosmic form, all of it is contained in a little image, in a grain of sand In that lump of clay is everything—the mango, the banana, wheat, gold, copper and silver All the world is in that grain of sand Just as an actor in a small troupe appears again and again on the stage taking different roles, the Lord appears in the universe Like a playwright who writes his own play and himself takes all the parts in it, the Lord produces a play without end, and Himself acts the parts of countless characters on His stage If we understand one character in this infinite drama, we shall understand them all.

The basis of image-worship is the same as that of metaphors and similes in poetry When we see a circle or a sphere we are filled with joy, for there is an order, a shapeliness in it This shapeliness is a divine quality The Lord's creation

is beautiful in all its parts and relations There is perfect harmony in it The sphere is an image of the shapeliness of the Lord But even so is the twisted tree in the undergrowth of the forest There is in it the freedom of the Lord This tree knows no bondage Who can bind the Lord ? The Lord who is beyond all bonds is in that contorted, unshapely tree A tall straight column reminds us of the Lord In the highly wrought ornamented pillar we see the Lord who has painted the sky with stars In a well-trimmed garden we see the restraint of the Lord, and in the primeval forest we see His grandeur and freedom In both we find joy Are we then mad ? No, there is joy in both, because there is in each a quality of the Lord The power in the smooth *salagram* is also in the rough *linga* taken from the Narmada Hence, if I do not see the form of the Lord in all its majesty, it does not matter.

It is because the Lord is present in every object through a distinct quality, that we find joy in it, we feel at one with it. This joy is not without a cause Why do we feel joy ? We are somehow related to it, and hence the joy. The mother's heart dances at the sight of her child, because she knows the kinship In the same way, link every object to the Lord. The Lord in me is also in the object To strengthen this kinship is to increase joy. There is no other means for joy Begin to establish the link of love everywhere, and then watch the miracles happen You will see then in every grain and every drop the Lord who pervades the boundless universe When we have the power to see this, what else do we need ? For this, however, it is essential to discipline and train the senses When the desire for enjoyment goes and the holy outlook of love is gained, then we shall see God alone in all objects This idea is described beautifully in the *Upanishads* What is the colour of the *atman* ? What can we say is the colour of the *atman* ? The *rishi* says, with love,

"*yathaa ayam indragopah*"

The *atman* is like this scarlet silk-soft insect, the *indragopa*. When one looks at the *indragopa*, what joy there is! What is the source of this joy? That which exists in me, exists in the *indragopa* too If there is no kinship between us, how could there be joy? The beautiful *atman* within me is within the *indragopa* too Hence the comparison. Why do we use similes? Why do we find joy in them? We use similes because things are alike, and we find joy in the likeness. If the things compared have nothing in common, where is the joy in it? If someone says that salt is like pepper, we should think him mad But if someone says that the stars are like flowers, we see the likeness and enjoy it. When we say, "Salt is like pepper," we do not experience the likeness, but to one whose vision has become wide enough to see the same Lord in the salt and in the pepper, the question, "What is salt like?" and the answer, "It is like pepper," will bring an experience of joy The warp and the woof of all the objects in the world is the Lord's form. In every object in the world the warp and the woof are alike the Lord's form, to see it, where is the need for the vision of the cosmic form?

(57) Not for us the cosmic form

Even if we see the cosmic form, can we bear it? For a beautiful little image of the Lord I feel a sweetness of love, a sense of belonging, that I can never experience on seeing the cosmic form. Arjuna's state was not far different He trembles and pleads at last, "Lord, let me see your dear familiar form again" Arjuna seems to tell us from his own experience, "Do not desire to see the cosmic form of the Lord" It is best that the Lord is seen pervading all the worlds, and all time, past, present and to come If that distant star should draw itself up into a ball of fire and come down and stand in front of me, what would happen to me? How peaceful those stars appear! They seem to speak to

me from the far distance. But if the star, that calms the eye from afar, came near? It is a burning ball. I would be reduced to ashes. Let all things be where they are and as they are in this boundless vast creation of the Lord. What joy can there be in huddling them all up into a single room?" Those thousands of doves in the aviary in Bombay, what freedom do they have? It is a depressing sight The pleasure is in this, that creation is divided into here, above and below And the same is true of Time. We do not remember the past and of the future we know nothing—and this is only for our good. In the Holy Quran are mentioned five things where God has sole power and man is helpless One of them is knowledge of the future. We are free to guess, but guessing is not knowledge. This ignorance concerning the future is indeed our good fortune. Likewise, our forgetfulness of the past is truly good. If a bad man becomes a good one, I do not respect him when I remember the past. No matter what he says, I am unable to forget his old sins It is only when he dies and is reborn in another form that the world can forget his sins Memories of the past increase our evil dispositions When all past experience is forgotten, everything is over. There must be some way of forgetting the sins and virtues of the past That way is death. When we cannot endure the sufferings of this birth, why rake up the muck-heaps of past *janmas*? Is there not enough rubbish in the little room of this one life? Even our childhood we tend to forget And it is good to forget it. To achieve Hindu-Muslim unity the only means is to forget the past Aurangazeb may have been a tyrant, but how long will you repeat it? There is a Gujerati folk-song by Ratan Bai which one hears very often. Its concluding lines say, "The fame of men alone survives on earth, their sins are forgotten." Time is like a sieve We should take only the good things of history and cast off the evil If men would forget the evil and remem-

ber only good, how wonderful it would be! But this does not happen. Forgetfulness is necessary, and that is why the Lord has given us death.

In truth, the world, as it is, is auspicious. Where is the need to gather up into a little spot this world of Time and Space? Familiarity breeds contempt. We should be intimate with some things and keep others at a distance. Before our teacher we sit humbly, at a distance. But with our mother, we go and sit in her lap. There is an appropriate way of dealing with the various images of reality. While we draw close to a flower, we step back from the fire. The beauty of the stars is in their distance. This is so with all creation. It is not as if we shall increase our joy by bringing very near to us that which is very far away. Real pleasure lies in letting things be wherever they are. We cannot say that something that gives delight from afar will always confer greater comfort when brought near. We should leave it, out there, and enjoy it from afar. There is no meaning in an enforced familiarity. There is no saying that there is joy or good in knowing the past and the future. Arjuna, over-mastered by love, importunately demanded, and the Lord yielded, and revealed to him the vision of His cosmic form. But, for me, the little image of the Lord will suffice. This little image is not a fragment of the Supreme. And even if it were, even if I saw only a foot or the toe of a foot of His boundless body, I would say, "How blessed I am! How great is my good fortune!" I have learnt this from experience. When Shri Jamnalal Bajaj threw open to the Harijans the Lakshminarayan temple in Wardha, I too went there for *darshan*. For some fifteen or twenty minutes I stood gazing at the image. It was as if I was in *samadhi*. As I looked at the face, the chest, the hands and then the feet, my eyes were rooted in the feet. All that remained with me was the feeling, "Sweet indeed is the worship of Your Feet." If the

great Lord cannot be contained within a little image, is it not enough that we behold His Feet ? Arjuna pleaded with the Lord , he could claim much from Him How intimate was his friendship, how great his love and affection ! What claims have I ? A sight of the Feet is enough for me That is more than I deserve

(58) The Quintessence

On this description of the Lord's divine form, I do not wish to dwell with my mind , to approach it with the mind would be sin Let us read again and again the holy verses describing the cosmic form and become pure I do not like to employ the mind to cut up the Lord's form It would be like the *aghora* form of worship Those who follow this path go to the cremation ground and, tearing off corpses, perform *tantra* worship The divine form of the Lord—

> " *visvataschakshuruta visvatomukho*
> *visvato baahuruta visvataspaat*—"

it is widespread, infinite Let us recite the verses describing it, cleanse the mind of sin and make it holy

In this description of the Lord there is only one point at which the mind begins to think The Lord tells Arjuna, " Arjuna, all these are mortal , make yourself an occasion, an instrument—I am the real doer of all action " These words keep ringing in one's heart When the thought arises in the mind that one should make oneself an instrument in the Lord's hand, then the mind begins to reflect How does one make oneself an instrument in God's hand ? How does one become a flute in Krishna's hands ? What would it be like if He put me to his lips and drew sweet notes through me ? To be a flute means to become hollow But I am stuffed full with passions and desires How then can music come through me ? My tone is gruff I am gross. I am filled with *aham-kara*, the sense of ' I ' I must empty myself of ego Only when I become fully free, altogether empty,

will the Lord breathe through me But to become a flute at the lips of the Lord is a deed of very great daring If I wish to become the sandals beneath His feet, even that would not be easy The sandals of the Lord should be so soft that they will cause no pain to His feet I should place myself between His feet and the thorns and stones I should cure and refine myself continually, and grow softer and softer And so it is not easy to become even the sandals of the Lord If I am to be wielded as a sword by the Lord, I must not be a massive lump of iron I should whet myself on the grindstone of *tapas*, penance, and acquire a keen and tempered edge My life should shine like a sword in the hands of the Lord These thoughts arise in my mind I am lost in the wish to become an instrument How this can come to be, the Lord Himself tells us in the last *sloka* of this Chapter Sankaracharya in his commentary calls this *sloka*, *sarvartha sara*, the quintessence of the *Gita*. It runs—

> " *matkarmakrt matparamo madbhaktah sangavarjitah*
> *nirvairassarvabhuteshu yah sa maameti paandava* "

" He, who bears enmity towards none, he who stands impartial and is free from attachment and serves me selflessly, he who dedicates to me all that he does, he who is filled with devotion to me, all-enduring, free of passion and desire, full of love, such a devotee becomes an instrument in the hand of the Lord " This is the essence of the *Gita's* teaching

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CHAPTER XII

BHAKTI—SAGUNA AND NIRGUNA

(59) From one-pointedness to universality—Chapters 6 to 11

The waters of the Ganga are everywhere holy and cleansing, but at Haridwar, Kasi and Prayag, they have a special purity They have made the whole world holy. The *Gita* too is sacred from beginning to end. But some of the intermediate Chapters have become holy places. One such place is the Twelfth Chapter The Lord Himself calls this " the stream of nectar "—" *ye tu dharmyaami tam idam yathoktam paiyupaasate.*" This is a small Chapter with only twenty *slokas*; nevertheless it is a stream of nectar It is sweet like nectar and confers a new and immortal life. In this Chapter, the Lord has Himself sung the essence of the glory of devotion, *bhakti*.

In reality, from the Sixth Chapter onwards, the philosophy of *bhakti* has been expounded. The exposition of the science of life occupied us in the first five Chapters The *karma* which consists in the performance of *svadharma*, the *vikarma*, the accompanying inner process which helps *karma*, and the final state of *akarma* resulting from the practice of both, which turns to ashes all *karma*—these ideas were expounded in the first five Chapters With this, the science of life is complete Then, from the Sixth Chapter to the end of the Eleventh Chapter, a kind of enquiry into the philosophy of *bhakti* engaged us. It began with *ekagrata*, one-pointedness The Sixth Chapter describes how to make the mind one-pointed, the means to this end, and the need for it. The Eleventh Chapter describes *samagrata*, choiceless universal awareness. We should now see how we made the long journey from *ekagrata* to *samagrata*.

We began with one-pointedness of mind Once concentration has been attained, one can pursue any subject. To

mention a subject which I like, we can apply the concentrated mind to the study of mathematics Assuredly, we gain much by this. But this is not the highest good we can get from concentration of mind We cannot judge the full value of concentration by the study of mathematics Through concentration we may achieve high success in mathematics and other branches of knowledge, but this is no true test of its value. Therefore the Seventh Chapter tells us that it is towards the feet of the Lord that our vision must be turned The Eighth Chapter says that we should unceasingly concentrate on the feet of the Lord—that we should try till the moment of death to keep our eyes and ears, our speech, absorbed in them. All our senses should be thus trained " The senses are now at home here; except through this awareness, they see nothing " All the senses should be filled with the Lord Whether those around us are lamenting loudly or praising the Lord, whether they are weaving webs of *vasanas*, or are saints free from desire, whether it is night or day, the practice of constancy throughout life in order that at the moment of death the Lord may stand in front of us—this is taught in the Eighth Chapter In the Sixth Chapter, *ekagrata*, one-pointedness , in the Seventh Chapter, *ekagrata* towards the Lord, which is *prapatti* or surrender , in the Eighth Chapter, *satatya* or constancy, and in the Ninth Chapter, *samarpana* or perfect dedication and service—these are described. In the Tenth Chapter, the order of progression, the successive stages are described—how to proceed step by step, how to receive the image of the Lord in one's heart, how gradually to realise the Supreme Being who pervades all things from the little ant to Brahmadeva The Eleventh Chapter describes *samagrata*, cosmic awareness. It is the vision of the cosmic form that I call *samagrata-yoga* The vision of the cosmic form is to experience all creation in a grain of sand. This is the *virat darsan* Thus, between the Sixth and the Eleventh

Chapters, *bhakti rasa* is passed again and again through various filters

(60) The saguna devotee and the nirguna devotee—both children of the same mother

Now, in the Twelfth Chapter we come to the end of the treatment of the philosophy of *bhakti* Arjuna questions the Lord here about the perfect state, as once before in the Fifth Chapter he questioned Him at the end of the discussion about the philosophy of life Arjuna asks, " Lord, some worship you as *saguna*, with form , others as *nirguna*, without form Tell me which of the two pleases you more "

What answer could the Lord give ? This is like asking a mother to choose between her two sons One of the two is a little child, who clings to his mother, who is filled with joy at sight of his mother, and cries when he is parted from her even for a moment Without her the world seems empty to him This is the younger son The other son is older. He too loves his mother dearly, but he has grown up and has reached the age of discretion He can bear to stay away from his mother Even if he has to stay away from her for five or six months, he would not mind it He serves his mother, taking full responsibility on himself Because he is busy with his work, he is able to endure separation from her He is respected by the world, and his mother is happy listening to people speaking highly of him That is the elder son. If the mother is asked, " You can keep only one of these two sons Which of them would you have ?" what answer could she give ? Which son would she choose ? Could she weigh them in a balance ? Considering the mother's situation, what would be her natural answer ? In her helplessness, she would say, " If I must give up one of them, I shall reconcile myself to parting from the elder son " She holds the little child closer to herself, she cannot let him go Drawn by the younger child, she might say something like, " It would

not matter so much if the elder son goes" But this is no real answer to the question, which of the sons she loves more. She says it because she has to say something But it would not be right to dig into the meaning of her words

The Lord had to face the same difficulty as this mother, when Arjuna questioned Him Arjuna asked, "Lord, you have two kinds of *bhaktas*. One of them loves you dearly and always thinks of you His eyes yearn to see you, his ears to hear your praise, his hands and feet to serve you The other, more self-reliant, self-controlled, concerned for the welfare of all creatures, is so absorbed, day and night, in the disinterested service of society, that he seems not to think of you at all. He is a *bhakta* filled with a sense of oneness. Tell me which of them is dearer to you" Like the mother in the story, Krishna too says, "The *saguna bhakta* is dear to me But the other *bhakta*, the *advaiti*, is also dear to me" The Lord too is in a dilemma—he gives some sort of an answer

And as a matter of fact, the two *bhaktas* are very much alike in every way. Their claims are equal To judge between them is to attempt something improper and impossible As Arjuna questioned the Lord about *karma* in the Fifth Chapter, so he questions Him about *bhakti* here In the Fifth Chapter, it is said that, with the help of *karma* and *vikarma*, man attains the state of *akarma* This state of *akarma* appears in two forms—while in one, a man acts day and night and yet does nothing, in the other, though he seems to do nothing all the twenty-four hours of the day, he turns the whole world upside down. *Akarma* appears in these two forms How to compare them ? One can compare a segment of a circle with that of another But how can we compare two segments of the same circle ? Both have the same shape and properties —they have the same form But in describing the basis of *akarma*, the Lord calls the one *sannyasa* and the other *karma-*

yoga Though the names are different, the substance is the same In the end, the choice is left to be decided according to which is easier and more accessible

The problem of *saguna* and *nirguna* is similar The *saguna* devotee serves the Lord through the *indriyas*, the organs of perception and action, the *nirguna* devotee thinks constantly of the good of all the world The first appears absorbed in outward service, but he meditates constantly within. The other seems to do no direct service, but within him a great service is going on. Which of these two *bhaktas* is superior? The one who works day and night and yet does not act, he is the *saguna* devotee. The *nirguna* devotee is one who is concerned within for the good of all, is thinking constantly of them Though differing outwardly, the two are of the same nature within, and both are dear to the Lord But, of the two, *saguna bhakti* is much the easier. Here again the Lord gives the same answer that He gave in the Fifth Chapter.

(61) Saguna is easy and safe

In the *yoga* of *saguna bhakti*, we directly employ the *indriyas*. The *indriyas* can be either a help or a hindrance or both Whether they save or destroy depends on the way we look at them Suppose that a man's mother is at the point of death, and wishes to see him; but there is a distance of fifteen miles between them It is wild, uneven country, with only a footpath In this situation, is the footpath a help or a hindrance? He might say, "What a wretched track! But for this, I would be by my mother's side this moment!" To such a man, the path appears an enemy But he manages somehow to walk the distance, all the time cursing the path But, whatever the difficulties of the path, he has to keep going and hurry forward If he looks on the path as his enemy and sits down in despair, the victory will go to his enemy, the path. But by running fast, he achieves victory

Another man in the same plight may say, "In this wilderness, thank God there is at least this narrow path This will help me to reach my ailing mother If even this were not available, how could I hope to cross the hills and jungles?" With gratitude he accepts the footpath as a ready means. He regards it with affection, as a friend, not an enemy. Whether you regard it as a friend or an enemy, as a help or a hindrance, you have to walk swiftly along the path Whether the path is an aid or an obstacle—this depends on the outlook of the man who treads it This applies to the *indriyas* also. Whether they are a help or a hindrance depends on the way you look at it

For the *saguna* worshipper, the *indriyas* are an aid They are like flowers to be offered up to the Lord. With his eyes, he beholds His form, with his ears, he listens to His story; with his mouth, he utters His holy name, on his feet he performs pilgrimages; and with his hands, renders service. In this way he dedicates all his *indriyas* to the Lord They are not there for enjoyment The flowers are there to be offered to the Lord, not to be worn round one's neck Thus he uses all his senses in the service of the Lord This is the way of the *saguna* worshipper

But to the *nirguna* worshipper, the senses seem to be an obstruction He keeps them under control, he locks them up in a room He starves them and stands guard over them The *saguna* worshipper feels no need for such care He has surrendered his *indriyas* at the feet of the Lord Both these are methods of controlling the *indriyas*, two ways of restraining them But whichever method we adopt, we must keep the *indriyas* under control The aim of both the methods is the same—to prevent them from wallowing in the pleasures of the senses One method is easy, the other difficult

The *nirguna* worshipper is devoted to the welfare of all beings This is no ordinary matter. "To work for the good

of all the world" is a thing easy to say, but difficult to practise One devoted to the good of the world can think of nothing else That is why *nirguna* worship is difficult *Saguna* worship, however, can be rendered in many ways, according to one's powers and opportunities. To serve the little village we were born in, to look after one's parents, this is *saguna* worship All we have to make sure is that we do not work against the welfare of the world No matter how insignificant your service is, so long as it causes no harm to others, it will ascend the scale of *bhakti*, otherwise, it would become a form of attachment Whether it is our parents or our friends, our suffering kinsfolk or great saints, that we serve, we should regard them as the Lord Imagine that in every one of them you see an image of the Lord and rest satisfied This *saguna* worship is easy, but *nirguna* worship is hard The meaning and substance of the two are the same But *saguna* is easier, and therefore better That is all

Apart from ease, there is another advantage in *saguna* worship There is danger in *nirguna* worship *Nirguna* is all *jnana*, knowledge But *saguna* is full of love, of *bhavana*, of feeling There is the moisture of the heart in it and perfect safety for the *bhakta* In *nirguna*, however, there is some danger There was a time when I relied on *jnana*, but now experience has taught me that mere *jnana* is not enough It is true that *jnana* reduces to ashes the grosser imperfections of the heart, but the subtler impurities, it cannot destroy Self-reliance, reason, discrimination, discipline, detachment —even if you employ all these, the subtle impurities cannot be removed Only the waters of *bhakti* have the power to cleanse them. If you like, you can call this "*para-avalambana*," dependence on *para*, but this *para* does not mean "another," but "the Supreme" Except with the help of the Lord, we cannot get rid of our impurities-

Some may say that we are here giving a narrow meaning to the word "*jnana*," that if *jnana* cannot cleanse the mind, its value is reduced. I accept this objection, but what I say is that as long as we are in this physical body, our knowledge, however pure it is, will have some impurity, some distortion, some imperfection—its power will be limited When pure *jnana* rises, I have not the slightest doubt that it will destroy every impurity, along with the mind But in this troubled and passionate flesh its power is reduced, and it cannot remove the subtler impurities This is why *bhakti* is necessary Hence I say that in *bhakti* man is better protected. *Saguna bhakti* is easy It relies on the Supreme, while *nirguna bhakti* trusts to oneself But what is the self that one trusts ? It is reliance on the Supreme that dwells within oneself. There is no man who attained purity with the help of the mind alone Through self-reliance, that is, through realisation of the Self within, pure knowledge is attained In other words even in the self-reliance of *nirguna bhakti*, the ground is the *atman*, the self

(62) Without nirguna, saguna too has defects

Just as I said that *saguna* worship is easy and safe, I can point to similar advantages in *nirguna bhakti* too In *nirguna*, there is a discipline, a restraint For example, we start institutions for various kinds of service Each of these is built round an individual , he is its main support. In the beginning, the institution rests on a personality But as it grows, it should derive its strength not from an individual but from a principle If such fidelity to a principle does not develop in it, the moment the founder and inspirer dies it is filled with darkness and falls into ruin Let me give an illustration I am fond of When the belt of the *charkha* snaps, not only are we prevented from spinning any more, but we cannot transfer the spun yarn to the spindle This is what happens to the institution When the man dies—

it is orphaned But this does not happen when fidelity to a person has been replaced by fidelity to a principle. *Saguna*, the personal, needs the help of *nirguna*, the impersonal Now and again, we should learn to get out of the personal, the visible The Ganga sprang from the Himalayas, the matted locks of Siva, but she did not stop there. It was only when she emerged from them, and crossing mountains, valleys and forests, began to flow on the plains, making music, that she was useful to people In the same way, an institution should be ready to stand on the pillars of principle even after the personality behind it is removed. When a builder puts up an arch, he supports it from below ; but once the arch is set, the support is removed It is only when it stands without the support, that we say that the support has done its work It is true that the river of inspiration rises in *saguna*, but it should reach perfection in fidelity to principle, it should flow into *nirguna* From the womb of *bhakti*, *jnana* should be born From the creeper of *bhakti*, the flower of *jnana* should blossom

The Lord Buddha knew this Hence he prescribed the three dedications Though at first the attachment is to a person, there should develop from it attachment to principle ; if this is not possible all at once, there should be, at least, attachment to the institution, in between The loyalty which once was paid to an individual, must now spread to ten or fifteen When there is no loyalty to a *sangha* or an institution, the members would start quarrelling among themselves First dedication to an individual, then dedication to an institution, and finally, dedication to the principle That is why the Buddhists take three vows of dedication—

" *buddham saranam gachhaami*
sangham saranam gachhaami
dhammam saranam gachhaami "

First, loyalty to the person, then to the *sangha*, but neither of these is strong enough Only when loyalty to principles is established, the institution begins to produce results. The stream of inspiration may begin in *saguna*, but should meet and merge in the sea of *nirguna.* Without *nirguna*, *saguna* is imperfect *Nirguna* keeps *saguna* from over-flowing its proper bounds—hence *saguna* owes much to it

In Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and all other religions, there is image-worship in one from or another. Though not the highest form of worship, it is considered worthy of respect, and something valuable in itself Image-worship is free from defect only so long as it remains within the bounds of *nirguna* Once it crosses these bounds, defects appear in *saguna* Any religion which blurs the line between *saguna* and *nirguna* declines and falls In the ancient *yagas*, animal sacrifices were offered Even now, worshippers of *Sakti* sacrifice living animals to her This is the excess of image-worship Here it has crossed its proper bounds, and has taken a wrong turn But if there is the restraint of loyalty to principle, there is no such danger

(63) The two are complementary—example from the Ramayana

Saguna is not only easy but free from danger, but it needs *nirguna* to complete it As *saguna* grows, the flower of *nirguna*, of devotion to principle, should blossom *Nirguna* and *saguna* complement each other , they are not incompatible Starting from *saguna*, one has to tread the path to the goal of *nirguna* *nirguna*, too, needs the waters of *saguna* to cleanse the subtle impurities of the mind. Each gains lustre from the other Both these kinds of *bhakti* are nobly illustrated throughout the *Ramayana*, especially in the *Ayodhya Kanda* Bharata illustrates the *nirguna* form of *bhakti*, and Lakshmana, the *saguna* form.

When Rama set out for the forest, he did not intend to take Lakshmana with him. Rama did not think it was at all necessary. He tried to console him, saying, " Lakshmana, I am going to the forest at the bidding of our father You should stay at home By coming with me, you would only add to the suffering of our parents Serve our parents and our people If you stay with them, I shall be free from care. Stay here in my place, and do my duty for me. In going to the forest, I am facing no danger I am only visiting *asramas* of *rishis* " With one word, Lakshmana makes a clean sweep of all Rama's arguments Tulsidas pictures this incident vividly Lakshmana's answer is, " You have shown me the noblest path ! It is also true that I ought to adopt it. But then, I shall not be able to bear the burden of ruling the state I have not the strength to act in your place I am only a child "

" *dinhi mohi sikh niki gosaa(n)yi*
laagi agam apnu kadaraau
narvai dhir dharam-dhur-dhaari
nigam-nitike te adhikaari
mai(n) sisu prabhu-saneh-pratipaalaa
mandaru meru ki lehi(n) maraalaa "

Lakshmana says, " How can the swan sustain the weight of Mount Meru ? Till this moment, Rama, I have grown up nourished by your love All this statesmanship, you can preach to someone else I am only a child," and so puts a stop to the discussion

Just as fish cannot live without water, Lakshmana could not live without Rama He had not the strength for it With all his being, he lived in and for Rama. When Rama slept, he found joy in keeping awake and serving him. When the eye is threatened, the hand rushes up to protect it, and takes the blow upon itself , in this way, Lakshmana had become the hand of Rama If there was a blow aimed

at Rama, Lakshmana received it first. Tulsidas illustrates this by a beautiful simile The flag flies high and is greeted with songs of honour and praise Its colours and form are the subject of song and story But who looks at the staff that stands straight and holds it? Like the staff that sustains the flag, Lakshmana upholds Rama's fame He stands straight and never bows or bends The fame is Rama's, and it fills the eyes of the world , but who observes the staff ? The dome is conspicuous, but the foundation catches no eye Rama's glory fills the world, but few think of Lakshmana For fourteen years, this staff stood straight and strong, did not bend He stayed in the background and spread Rama's greatness Rama used Lakshmana to achieve some of his most difficult deeds In the end, he entrusted to Lakshmana even the task of taking Sita and leaving her in the forest Poor Lakshmana did this too Lakshmana was left with no separate existence of his own. He had become Rama's eyes, Rama's hands and feet, Rama's mind As the river becomes one with the sea, Lakshmana's service had become one with Rama He had become Rama's shadow This devotion of Lakshmana was *saguna bhakti*

But Bharata practises *nirguna bhakti* And this too, Tulsidas has pictured beautifully When Rama left for the forest, Bharata was not in Ayodhya When Bharata returned home, Dasaratha had already died Vasishtha, the *guru*, advised Bharata to assume the rule of the State. But Bharata answered, " I must see Rama " He was anxious to see Rama , at the same time, he also made arrangements for looking after the kingdom His *bhavana* was, " The kingdom is Rama's To arrange for its administration is to do Rama's work The property belongs to the owner, to manage it alone is my duty " Bharata could not feel as free as Lakshmana This is Bharata's position Devotion to Rama means carrying out the work of Rama ; else what

good is devotion ? After making all arrangements for the care of the state, he goes to the forest to meet Rama. He says to Rama, " Dear brother, this is your kingdom. It is for you . . "but before he could complete the sentence, Rama intervenes, " No Bharata, please look after the kingdom yourself " Bharata stands still, shrinking from a refusal. He says, " I shall faithfully obey your command " Whatever Rama says, he has to accept All that was his, he had already surrendered to Rama He went back and performed the duties of the state But he did this, not from Ayodhya, but from a place two miles away, where he lived and did penance As an ascetic he ruled the kingdom When Rama and Bharata met again, it was difficult to make out which of them was the ascetic who had performed penance in the forest. The two faces are alike, they are of the same age, they bear the same marks of *tapasya* on their faces—it is impossible to say which is Rama and which is Bharata If someone could paint this situation, how noble it would be ! Though Bharata was physically far away from Rama, in spirit, they were not separated even for an instant. Though he attended to the affairs of the kingdom, his heart was all the time with Rama *Nirguna bhakti* is filled to the brim with *saguna.* How then could there be any thought of separation from Rama ? Bharata never felt any sense of separation from Rama He was doing the work of his lord

The young people of today say, " We don't understand all this about Rama-*nama*, Rama-*bhakti*, and Rama-worship But we shall do God's work " How God's work is to be done, Bharata has shown us by his example. By doing God's work, he assimilated and transformed the separation from Rama To keep doing God's work and so to have no time even to feel the sense of separation from Him, is one thing; but, it is quite a different thing when one has no dealings

with God at all To live a life of self-control, doing the work of the Lord, is rare indeed Though Bharata's way of life is to work in the spirit of *nirguna*, it never loses contact with its *saguna* basis. "Rama, my lord," he says, "I shall humbly do your bidding Whatever you say, I shall not doubt or question" But then, as he prepares to leave, he turns again to Rama, and says, "Lord, but my heart is yet unreconciled I feel as if I've lost something" Rama at once understood his yearning and said, "Here, take these sandals" In the end, the respect for *saguna* remains In the end, *saguna* has moistened *nirguna* with the heart's affections Lakshmana would not have been content with Rama's sandals In his view, it would have been like drinking buttermilk when one thirsts for milk Bharata's standpoint is different Though outwardly he stayed far away and worked, his heart was full of Rama Though Bharata thought that devotion to Rama consisted in doing his duty, he still felt the need for the sandals Without them, he could not bear the burden of kingship He did his duty, deriving his authority from the sandals As Lakshmana was a *bhakta* of Rama, so too was Bharata. But in appearance they differ. Though Bharata was firm in his loyalty to duty and principle, he too needed the living warmth of the symbol

(64) An example from the story of Krishna

The sap of *Hari-bhakti*, devotion to the Lord, is essential. Hence the Lord tells Arjuna again and again, "*mayyaasaktamanaah paartha*,"—"Arjuna, be devoted to me, rely on me, and so keep working" The refrain of the *Bhagavad Gita* is "*anasakti*," "*nissangata*" (non-attachment) It dislikes and avoids the very word "*asakti*," attachment It repeatedly insists that one should remain unattached while performing action, that one should act without desire and without hatred, that one should act regardless of the fruit. It is this *Bhagavad Gita* that says here, "Arjuna, be attached

to me." But here, we must remember that attachment to the Lord is a noble thing. It is not like the attachment to any object in the world. *Saguna* and *nirguna* are closely intertwined. *Saguna* can never be removed from its *nirguna* ground. *Nirguna* needs the sap of *saguna*. A man who is ever busy doing his duty is worshipping God through work. But the moisture, the *rasa* of love, should go into the worship. "*maamanusmara yuddhya cha*." "Work with me in mind." Yes, work is *puja*, worship. But the *bhavana* within should be kept alive. The mere offering of flowers is not *puja*. There must go with it *bhavana*, the appropriate inner attitude. *Puja* with flowers is one way of worship; doing good actions is another way. But in both the moisture of *bhavana* is essential. If when we offer flowers, there is no *bhavana* within, it is as if we are flinging flowers on a mere stone. Therefore, the real thing is *bhavana*, the inward approach. Whether we make the approach through form or the formless, through knowledge or devotion, through action or love, it is essentially the same. The final experience from one is the same as that from the other.

Look at Uddhava and Arjuna. I have taken a big jump from the *Ramayana* to the *Mahabharata*. But then I have a right to do it, for Rama and Krishna are both one. As Bharata stands to Lakshmana, so Arjuna does to Uddhava. Wherever Krishna is, there Uddhava has to be. He cannot bear even a moment's separation from Krishna. He is ever absorbed in the service of Sri Krishna. Without Krishna, the whole world appears dull and tasteless to him. Arjuna too was Krishna's friend, but he lived far away in Delhi. Arjuna was a servant of Krishna, he was the doer of His work; but while Krishna was in Dvaraka, Arjuna was in Hastinapura. Such was their relationship. When it was time for Krishna to leave his body, he said to Uddhava, "Udho, I am going now." Uddhava pleaded, "Won't

you take me with you ? Come, let us go together" But Krishna answered, "I am not for that When the sun sets, it leaves its brightness in fire , so let me leave my light with you" Thus the Lord made his final arrangements and sent Uddhava forth with the light of *jnana* Later, on his journey, Uddhava comes to know through Rishi Maitreya that the Lord had returned to His home in Vaikuntha But his heart did not grieve in the least over the news , it did not appear to him that anything much had happened You know the saying, "The master died and the pupil cried The teaching and the learning were both wasted !" Such was not the state of Uddhava He did not feel that there was any separation All his life he had performed *saguna* worship and lived in the presence of the Lord But now he had begun to experience the joy even of *nirguna* In this way he had traversed the path to *nirguna* *Saguna* may come first, but the next step of *nirguna* has to follow , otherwise there is no completeness

Arjuna's state is just the opposite What had Krishna asked him to do ? He had entrusted to him the duty of protecting the women after his lifetime Arjuna had gone from Delhi to Dvaraka and was returning with the ladies. At Hissar, in the Punjab, on the way, some robbers stopped and plundered them Arjuna was considered the most valiant man of his age , he was famous as a hero He was celebrated as Jaya, the victorious , he had confronted Siva face to face and made Him bow to him And this Arjuna, in the neighbourhood of Ajmer, took to his feet and fled. Because he had parted from Krishna, his mind was quite upset , it was as if he had lost his life All that remained was an unsupported corpse The fact is that Arjuna, the *nirguna* worshipper who had constantly performed *karma* and lived far away from Krishna, found in the end that this separation was unbearable. His *nirguna* gave way at last

under this stress. It was as if he had come to the end of all *karma*. *Saguna* experience came at last to complete his *nirguna bhakti*. That is, *saguna* has to go towards *nirguna* and *nirguna* has to come towards *saguna*. Thus each completes the other.

(65) Both are one—personal experience

Therefore, when we begin to describe the differences between the *saguna* and the *nirguna* worshipper, it becomes difficult. In the end, *saguna* and *nirguna* become one. Though the stream of *bhakti* springs from *saguna*, it reaches *nirguna* in the end. Here is an old story. I had gone to Vaikom to observe the satyagraha there. I remembered the geographical fact that Sankaracharya's birthplace was on the border of Malabar. I had a feeling that Sankara's village, Kaladi, was somewhere near. I asked the Malayali gentleman who accompanied me. He said, "It is some 10 or 12 miles from here. Do you want to go there?" I said I did not. I was going to see the satyagraha in progress, and it did not seem proper to go elsewhere. So on that occasion I did not go to that village. Even now it seems to me that I was right in not going there then. But that night, when I went to bed, that village of Kaladi and the image of Sankaracharya stood before my eyes again and again. I could not sleep. That experience is still with me, as fresh today as it was then. Again and again that night, I thought of Sankaracharya—of the power of his *jnana*, his divine certitude in *advaita*, the extraordinary, glowing *vairagya*, non-attachment, which convinced him that *samsara*, this phenomenal life, was all false, of the majesty of his language and the boundless help I have received from him. All night long these images stood before me. Then I realised how *nirguna* is filled to the brim with *saguna*. Even seeing him face to face would not have evoked such love. Even *nirguna* is filled full with *saguna*. For the most part, I do not write

letters to friends to enquire about their welfare But even when I do not write to a friend, the thought of him is ever present, it fills my mind Thus, *saguna* lies hidden in *nirguna*. *Saguna* and *nirguna* are indeed one. Placing an image before us and worshipping it with visible outward service, on the one hand, and on the other, being constantly concerned inwardly with the world's welfare, while performing no outward acts of worship—both these have the same worth and value

(66) Therefore let us attain the qualities of the bhakta

Finally, we must admit that it is difficult to distinguish between what is *saguna* and what is *nirguna* What looks like *saguna* from one point of view may be *nirguna* from another We worship *saguna* by placing a stone in front of us and performing *puja* In this stone we conceive the presence of God In our mother and in saints, we see the visible presence of *chaitanya*, the living spirit In them *jnana*, love and warmth of heart shine clear But we do not regard them as the Supreme, we do not worship them. Such people, filled with the living spirit, are seen by us all We should therefore serve them , we should see in them the concrete manifestation of the Supreme And yet, instead of doing this, people prefer to see the Lord in a stone. To see the Lord in a stone is in a sense the ultimate limit of *nirguna* In the saints, in one's parents, in one's neighbours, love and knowledge and willingness to help are manifest. It is easy to conceive the presence of God in them ; but it is difficult to conceive it in a stone. The stone that lies in the *Narmada*, we regard as Siva Is not this *nirguna* worship ? But, on the contrary, if we do not conceive the presence of God in the stone, where else can we conceive it ? It is only the stone that is fit to be the image of the Lord It is changeless, full of peace Light or darkness, heat or cold, the stone remains the same. This changeless,

passionless stone is best fitted to be a symbol of the Lord. Father, mother, neighbour, the people, all these are subject to passion and change Therefore, in one sense, it is more difficult to serve these than to serve the stone

The truth of the matter is that *saguna* and *nirguna* complete each other *Saguna* is easy and *nirguna* difficult But from another point of view, *saguna* is difficult and *nirguna* easy Both these means take us to the same end. The Fifth Chapter told us that the *yogi* who works all the twenty-four hours of the day and yet does nothing is the same as the *sannyasi* who does nothing all the day and yet does everything. Similarly, the state of action, which is *saguna*, and the *yoga* of *sannyasa* which is *nirguna*, are the same. The difficulty which the Lord faced in answering the question, " Is *sannyasa* or *yoga*, renunciation or action, better ? ", the same difficulty the Lord faces here Finally it became necessary to decide on the basis of which was easier and which was more difficult. Otherwise action and renunciation, *saguna* and *nirguna*, are both the same In the end, the Lord says, " Arjuna whether you are a *saguna bhakta* or a *nirguna bhakta*, it does not matter Only be a *bhakta*, and not a stupid stone " And after saying this, He describes the qualities of a *bhakta*. Nectar may be sweet, but we have had no chance of tasting it. But the sweetness of these qualities we can taste for ourselves There is no need to imagine them. Let us experience these qualities The qualities of the *bhakta* in the Twelfth Chapter are—like those of the *sthitaprajna* in the Second Chapter —to be read every day, reflected upon, and brought into practice by stages so that our lives may gain strength In this way, we should, little by little, turn our lives towards God.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SELF AND THE NON-SELF

(67) Distinguishing between body and soul helps karma-yoga

Vyasadev has poured into the *Bhagavad Gita* the essence of his life He has written many other long works The *Mahabharata* alone contains a hundred or a hundred and twenty-five thousand slokas In Sanskrit, the very word Vyasa has acquired the meaning of extensiveness But, in the *Gita*, he did not pursue elaboration As Euclid in his " Elements of Geometry " states propositions and formulates principles, Vyasadev, in the *Gita*, gives us the principles useful for living In the *Bhagavad Gita*, there is no long discussion, nothing elaborate The main reason for this is that everything stated in the *Gita* is meant to be tested in the life of every man , it is intended to be verified in practice. Only what is necessary for the conduct of life is set down in the *Gita* Vyasa's intention too was only this, and hence he was content with a brief statement of principles From this contentment we can see for ourselves how great was his faith in truth and self-realisation. When a thing is true, there is no need to use any arguments to substantiate it

The main reason why we look constantly to the *Gita* is that, whenever we need help, we may get it from the *Gita* And, indeed, we always do get it. Because the *Gita* is a science applicable to life, it emphasises *svadharma* If there is one strong support for man's life, it is the performance of *svadharma* All the superstructure has to be built on *svadharma* The strength of the superstructure depends on the strength of the foundation It is the performance of *svadharma* that the *Gita* calls *karma* Around this *karma*, which is the performance of *svadharma*, the Gita arranges a number of other matters. To safeguard this, many *vikarmas* are

conceived. To give beauty to the performance of *svadharma*, to crown it with success, it should be given all the help and support that it needs. That is why we have been considering many such aids so far. Many of them were in the form of *bhakti*. Today, in the Thirteenth Chapter, we come to another aid in the performance of *svadharma*; this is related to the intellectual aspect.

The *Gita* stresses everywhere that the man who performs *svadharma* should give up the fruit. One must act, but one must also renounce the fruit. Water the tree, tend it with care, but do not desire to enjoy its shade or fruit or flower. This is *karma-yoga* through the practice of *svadharma*. *Karma-yoga* does not mean merely the performance of *karma*. Action takes place all the time, everywhere in creation. There is no need to say it; but the *karma* that is the performance of *svadharma*—not mere action, but acting well and renouncing the fruit—this is easy to say, and appears easy to understand, but it is very difficult to put into practice. For it is considered that the motive force behind any action is the desire for fruit. To act without the desire for fruit is to turn things upside down. It is the very opposite of the way the world proceeds. When a man works unremittingly, we say that the *karma-yoga* of the *Gita* fills his life. We say that the life of a man who works constantly is full of *karma-yoga*, but this is a loose use of language. All this is not *karma-yoga* as explained in the *Gita*. Among millions of people who perform action—not mere action, but even action in the form of *svadharma*—it is difficult to get a few who perform the *karma-yoga* of the *Gita*. A perfect *karma-yogi*—in the true and subtle meaning of the *Gita*—perhaps we shall never find. To perform *karma* and yet to give up its fruit is a most uncommon thing. So far, the *Gita* has been making and maintaining just this distinction.

Another distinction which reinforces this is given in the Thirteenth Chapter The distinction between body and spirit helps the separation of action from the desire for the fruit This is set forth in the Thirteenth Chapter. The figure which we see with our eyes, we call an image, a form, a body But even after seeing with our eyes the outer form, we still have to enter into the object and see it from within We have to remove the armour, the outer skin, of the fruit and taste the pulp within Even the coconut one has to break to see what there is within Despite its rough sharp exterior, the jack-fruit is full of sweet juicy pulp

Whether we look at ourselves or others, we have to distinguish the inside from the outside Now, what is the significance of removing the skin? It means that, in every object, the outer skin and the inner substance should be distinguished Every object has two forms—an outer body and an inner soul This is also true of *karma* The outer result is the body of *karma* The inner purity that results from *karma* is its soul Let us give up the body, the outward result of the performance of *svadharma*, and let us bear in our hearts the essence of action, the soul which is inner purity Let us acquire the habit of looking at things in this way, of seeing everything in its essence, setting aside the body To the eye, the heart and the mind, we should give the exercise, the training and the habit of such discrimination In every thing we should leave aside the body and reverence the soul. This distinction has been made in the Thirteenth Chapter, for us to think about

(68) The fundamentals of growth

The habit of looking for the essence of things is noble indeed If only we could acquire it from childhood onwards, how good it would be! This is something that one should make one's own. It appears to many that *adhyatmavidya*, the science of the spirit, has no connection with ordinary

life. Others feel that, even if such a connection were possible, it is not desirable. If we could arrange to train people from childhood onwards to distinguish between the body and the spirit, it would be a matter for joy This is a problem in the art of teaching. As a result of faulty education, the minds of children today are filled with evil *samskaras*, wrong tendencies This education does not carry us beyond the bounds of the feeling, "I am only the body" The activities all relate to the body, and yet the quality that the body should attain, the form that should be given to it, is found nowhere. While thus vain worship is offered to the body, no attention is paid to the joys of the soul This condition has resulted from the present system of education Worship is offered day and night to the idol of the body.

From childhood we are taught to worship this deity, the body If you hurt your foot, it is enough if you apply a little clay to it The child would be satisfied with this, might feel that even this treatment is unnecessary. He would think nothing of a scratch or an abrasion But not so his parents and guardians. They would draw the child near and fuss over it, saying, "Oh dear! How badly you have hurt yourself! How did it happen? Where did you fall? What a deep cut! Look, it's bleeding!" Even if the child is not crying, they make him cry What is one to say of this achievement? Children are constantly told not to jump about, or play, for fear of falling and getting hurt. They are given a one-sided education which teaches them to think only of the body

Even when we praise or blame the child, it is in reference to the body We say, "How dirty you are!" How it hurts the child, and how false is this identification of the child with the body! It is true that there is dirt and it is true that it needs to be washed off But instead of casually washing off the dirt from the body, why attack the child?

He cannot bear it. He becomes thoroughly miserable While his heart, his inner self, is all purity and cleanliness, why this wrong attribution of dirt ? In reality, the child is far from dirty The child is the Lord Himself, absolute in his beauty, sweetness, holiness and love In the child too He is manifest , but we call the child dirty ! What is this connection between him and dirt ? Since the child does not understand this at all, he cannot bear this attack on him. He is deeply disturbed, and such disturbance stands in the way of improvement Hence we should explain things clearly to him and keep him clean and tidy

Instead of this, we impress on the child's mind the idea that he is the body There is an important principle in the art of teaching that we should recognise The teacher should have the *bhavana*, the attitude, that the child is beautiful in every way If the pupil gives a wrong answer, he is slapped. What is the connection between the slap and the error ? If he comes late to school, a blow descends on him The blood rushes up to his face, but will that make him come earlier to school ? Can this swifter flow of blood tell him what the time is ? To tell the truth, by such treatment, we only strengthen the animal in him We confirm the *bhavana* that he is the body We build his life on the foundation of fear If we really want him to improve, we cannot do so by the use of force, which only heightens the body sense. One improves only when one realises, " I am different from the body."

There is no harm in being aware of one's defects either of the body or the mind The awareness helps one to remove these defects But one must understand clearly that one is not the body 'I' am altogether distinct from the body, separate, entirely beautiful, bright, holy, free of imperfection. When a man examines himself to remove his imperfections, he makes a distinction between himself and the body. So

when others draw his attention to the imperfections in him, he does not lose his temper. Instead, he considers carefully the faults in the mechanism of his body or mind and tries to set them right. On the contrary, a person who does not make this distinction between the body and himself cannot improve himself at all "This body, this lump of flesh, this image of clay, this is me"—if a man thinks thus, how could he improve himself? Improvement becomes possible only when we begin to realise that the body is given to us as a means, an instrument When someone points out that something is wrong with my *charkha*, do I get angry? On the contrary, any fault found in it, I set right. The body too is exactly like this The body is a tool with which to cultivate the field of the Lord If it gets out of order, it should of course be set right forthwith The body being an instrument, we should keep ourselves distinct from it, and try to get rid of defects in it I am separate from this instrument. I am its master and owner, I make it work and receive its noble service From childhood onwards, we should cultivate this attitude of remaining separate from the body.

As the spectator who stands aloof from the game sees most clearly its merits and defects, it is only when we stand aloof from the body, mind and intellect that we can observe the merits and defects in them Some people say, "My memory is getting feeble Please tell me what do to about it" When a man says this, it is clear that he looks on himself as different from his memory He says, "My memory has become dull," as he might say of any other of his instruments, that it has lost its quality One may mislay one's child, one may mislay one's book, but one cannot mislay oneself. When at the end he dies, the body is utterly lost and turns to nothing, but he himself remains the same He is whole, and free from all disease This is a thing to understand Once we understand this, we are released from many conflicts and difficulties

(69) Attachment to the body obstructs living

As a result of the widespread assumption that the body is oneself, man has thoughtlessly constructed for himself a large variety of means for cherishing the body The very sight of them is terrifying Man's constant concern is that the body is getting old ; it is becoming thin and dry , and yet it must by some means be perpetuated But, after all, how long can you keep alive this body, this outer skin ? It is only till death, isn't it ? When the fell sergeant Death presents his warrant, can the body resist it for a moment ? In the presence of Death, all one's pride freezes And yet, for the sake of this frail body, man accumulates innumerable means of support Day and night, he is anxious about his body. Nowadays, they say that there is no harm in eating meat to preserve the body The human body, then, is so precious that we should eat meat to preserve it. They say that the animal's body is less precious Why ? Why is the human body so precious ? What is the reason ? Can it be that the animal eats what it likes, that it has no idea beyond satisfaction of needs ? Man does not act like this. Man takes care of the creatures around him. That is why the human body has value, that is why it is precious But by eating meat we destroy that which makes the human body precious My good man, your greatness depends, does it not, on the fact that you live with self-control, that you labour for the safety of all beings, that you care for them and cherish them ? Is it not because of this quality in you, which is not found in animals, that man is considered nobler ? That is why it is said that human birth is difficult to attain But if we destroy the foundation of man's greatness and nobility, how can the superstructure remain ? If man too, without shrinking, behaves like any other animal and lives on flesh, it would be like cutting off from the tree the branch on which one sits.

Medical science is performing many miracles today Into the body of a living animal they inject disease germs and watch its effects. The knowledge gained by giving all this pain to a living creature is used for the sake of the worthless human body And all this goes on in the name of "compassion to creatures" Producing disease germs in the animal's body, we take out the serum for injecting into the human body. Many such terrible actions are being done. This body, for whose sake we do so much, is as brittle as glass and will be shattered to pieces any moment There is no certainty how long it will last Though all these efforts are for safeguarding the human body, what do we find in actual experience ? As we go on trying to preserve the delicate human body, it goes on disintegrating. It is not as if we do not understand all this, and yet we keep trying to fatten it and make much of it

We never consider what kind of food will make the mind *sattvik*, make it bright and clear What one should do, what aids one should seek to make the mind pure, the intellect clear, we never think All that we think of is how to increase the weight of our body, how the clay of the earth can be plastered on to this body Just as cowdung cakes fall off the wall when they are dry, this clay plaster on our body disintegrates, leaving it as it was What then is the use of adding to the body all this unbearable weight of clay ? Why make the body so fat ? The body is a tool, and we should certainly do all that is necessary to keep it fit. A machine should be made to work, it must be well used. But can one identify oneself with the machine ? And should we not think in the same way of this machine, the body ?

The truth is that the body is not an end, but a means Once we are confirmed in this attitude, all this fussing over the body will cease Life will present a different appearance to us Then we would see no merit in decking the body.

Indeed a piece of ordinary cloth will do to cover it But no. We want the cloth to be soft and smooth, dyed in beautiful colours, with good patterns and a border For the sake of this, we make a number of people labour What is all this for ? Does not the Creator know His job ? If the body needs all these patterns, would He not have spent on your body and mine the skill He has shown on the leopard's skin ? Was it beyond His powers ? He could have fixed to our backs a magnificent tail like the peacock's But the Lord has made man's skin of a single colour. The slightest spot on it spoils its beauty Man is beautiful as he is It is not God's intention that he should be beautified further Is not Creation extraordinarily beautiful ? All that man has to do is to behold it with his eyes and be content But he has missed his way They say that Germany has destroyed our colours My dear man, the colour of your heart was already dead It is only then that you developed a taste for these artificial dyes. As a result, you have become dependent on others You have been needlessly caught in this whirlpool of beautifying the body Cultivating the mind, developing the intellect, and making the heart beautiful—these have been neglected !

(70) " That thou art "

Therefore the thought that the Lord gives us in the Thirteenth Chapter is most valuable " You are not the body, you are the Self " "*Tat tvam asi*"—" You are indeed the Self " This thought, this saying, is most noble, pure and holy This great truth—" You are not this outer covering, the skin, but the true indestructible fruit within "—finds an important place in Sanskrit literature The moment there arises in the mind of man the thought,—" That are you," " I am not this body, I am the Self Supreme "—a new joy, unknown before, wells up in the heart These words that spring from the heart are filled with the subtle thought, " Nothing, no one, in the world can destroy this form of mine "

I am the Self, indestructible, flawless, transcending the body. The body has been given to me for the sake of the Self. Whenever there is a chance of the Supreme principle being defiled, I shall, in order to safeguard it, throw away this body. I shall ever be ready to offer up the body in sacrifice in order to keep the flame of the Self brightly burning. Is it to compass my own defeat that I am riding the body ? I must hold sway over the body. I shall put it to good use ; through it I shall increase the welfare and prosperity of the world. "I shall fill the three worlds with joy." For the sake of a great ideal, I shall throw away the body, shouting, "Victory to the Lord." The rich man, when his clothes become a little dirty, throws them away and puts on new ones. I shall treat the body in the same way. It is needed for work. But when it becomes useless for the purpose, why should I hesitate to cast it aside ?

This too is the lesson we learn from satyagraha. The body and the Self are two different things. The day a man discovers this secret, his real education, his real growth begins. It is only then that satyagraha will succeed. Therefore it is necessary for each one of us to impress this *bhavana* on our hearts. The body is only a means, an occasion, an instrument given by the Lord. The day the need for it ceases, it must be thrown away. In summer we put away our warm winter wear ; in the morning we lay aside the blankets we use at night ; we remove in the evening the clothes we wore in the morning. We should regard the body in the same light. As long as the body is useful, we should keep it ; but when it is no more useful, we should fling it aside. The Lord teaches us this device to help the growth of the soul.

(71) An end to tyranny

So long as we do not realise that we are distinct from the body, wicked people will tyrannise over us and enslave us. There is no knowing what injury they will do to us. It is

because of fear that tyranny becomes possible A *rakshasa* caught hold of a man, and made him work for him ceaselessly. If he paused a little, he threatened him saying, "I shall eat you up I shall destroy you" At first the man was afraid, but when he could stand it no longer, he said, "All right, eat me up if you want to" But how could the *rakshasa* afford to eat him up ? What he wanted was a servant, a slave. If he were eaten up, who would do the work ? The *rakshasa* was merely threatening When he got the reply, "All right, eat me up," his power came to an end Tyrants know that their subjects cling to the body By inflicting pain on the body, they can enslave and control others But when you give up attachment to the body, you become an emperor, you achieve freedom All power comes into your hands No one can exercise authority over you The very basis of tyranny breaks down For the basis of tyranny is the *bhavana*, "I am the body" Knowing that through suffering inflicted on the body they can tyrannise over others, they use threatening language

"I am the body"—this *bhavana* of mine arouses in others the desire to tyrannise, to inflict pain But what did the great English martyr Cranmer say ? "If you would burn me, by all means, do Here, burn this right hand first, for this hand hath offended" In the same way, Latimer said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as (I trust) shall never be put out" Who could burn such men ? They lit a fire of *dharma* which no one can put out. Their task was to burn this candle of the body and spread everywhere the light of truth Socrates was sentenced to death by poison. He said then, "I am old This body is due to be destroyed in a short while What valour do you show by destroying that which is about to perish ? Consider, some day the body has to die. Where is the credit in killing

selfish impulse. Discipline takes the place of self-indulgence. When the soul thus enters the domain of ethics, the Self does not merely stand aside and watch. It expresses approval from within, saying, "Well done!" Now it ceases to be merely an "*upadrashtaa*," a witness, and becomes an "*anumantaa*," one who assents and approves.

A hungry man comes to your door when you have just sat down to eat. You give the food away to him. When, late at night, what you did comes back to mind, you hear the still small voice of the Self saying, "You have done well." When the mother pats her child on the back and says, "Well done, my child!" he has the feeling that he has gained the whole world. Even so, the approving voice of the Self within fills us with joy and strength. Now the soul has left the path of pleasure and planted its feet firmly on the path of right conduct.

Then we come to the next stage. Through doing his duty, man tries to cleanse his mind and heart. But as he does this, a point is reached when he gets tired. Then the soul begins to pray, "Oh Lord! I have come to the end of my efforts. Give me more strength, more power." Until a man realises that he cannot achieve success by his own efforts, however hard, he cannot understand the secret of prayer. When he has put all his strength into his efforts and finds them inadequate, he should call on the Supreme with a sad and yearning heart, as Draupadi did. The stream of the Lord's compassion and succour flows ceaselessly. Whoever is thirsty can drink of it as of right; whoever has need, can seek fulfilment there. This is the relationship in the third stage. The Supreme now comes very close. He comes running now to help and does not merely offer words of praise.

At first, the Lord stood at a distance. As the teacher, giving his pupil a question to answer, stands aside and watches, so too, as long as the soul adheres to the life of pleasure,

the Supreme stands aloof and says "All right, play your pranks." Then the *jiva* enters the sphere of ethics Now the Supreme can remain neutral no longer When he sees that good things are happening through the *jiva*, the Lord looks in and says, "Well done!" When through such good actions the grosser faults of the mind are removed, and the time comes for cleansing the subtle impurities, the man finds all his efforts are inadequate, he calls on the Lord for help Then He answers the call and comes running Whenever the *bhakta's* strength declines, He comes and stands before him. *Suryanarayana* (the Lord in the form of the sun), the sergeant of the whole world, is ever standing at your door He will not break open a closed door and enter, for he is a servant. He gives the respect due to the master He will not knock. The master sleeps within, and so the servant sun stands waiting outside. But let the door be opened ever so little, he will enter with all his brightness and drive away the darkness. The Lord is just like that If you seek His help, He will come with arms outstretched On the banks of the river Bhima in Pandharpur, He stands ready with His stands on His hips Tukaram and others describe Vitthal as ready to save, with arms outstretched Through the open nostril, the air rushes in. Through the open door, the light comes flooding in But even this comparison with air and light is not good enough The Lord is nearer to us than they. He is more eager to help us He is the *upadrashtaa*, the witness, and the *anumantaa*, the one who assents, but He is also, in every way, the *bhartaa*, the support When we are unable to purify the mind, and cry helplessly, "My life is in your hands, Oh Lord; save me!" or pray, "You are my sole helper, I need your support," how can He, who is all compassion, stand aside? The Lord, the helper of the devotee, He who makes perfect all that is incomplete, comes running to us Then He washes hides for Raidas, sells meat for the butcher Sajan, weaves cloth for Kabir, and grinds at the stone with Janabai.

The next stage is to dedicate to the Lord even the fruit of action, which we receive by His grace. At this stage, the *jiva* says to the Lord "The fruit is yours. Enjoy it." Namadev sat down obstinately insisting, "Lord, you have to drink this milk." What a lovely situation! The milk which is the result of all actions, he dedicates to the Lord! In this way, all the earnings and savings of his life, he dedicates to the Lord, to whose grace he owes them. When Dharmaputra was about to set foot in heaven, the dog that was with him was not allowed to enter. Then Dharmaputra renounced in one instant all the merits he had accumulated in a lifetime —the right to heaven. In the same way, the *bhakta* gives over to the Lord all the fruits of action. The Lord who was *upadrashtaa, anumantaa, bhartaa*, has now become the *bhoktaa*, the enjoyer. The *jiva* has now reached the state when, through this body, the Lord enjoys pleasure.

Hereafter, one must give up making *samkalpa*, forming resolutions. There are three stages in action. First we make a resolve, then we act, and finally the fruit comes to us. The fruit that through the grace of the Lord came from the action, even that has been given over to the Lord. He who does the action is the Lord. He who tastes the fruit is the Lord. Now, let the resolve too be made by the Lord. In this way let the beginning, the middle and the end of action be filled with the Lord. Jnanadev says, "The water flows without speaking back wherever the gardener turns it. Let us be like this water always." The water nourishes the flower plant or the fruit tree at the bidding of the gardener. In the same way, let the Lord decide what action should take place through my hands. Let me entrust to Him the responsibility for all the resolves of my mind. When I have put all my weight on the horse, why carry a few things on my head? Why not put them too on the horse's back? Even if I carry them on my head, does not the horse that carries me carry that burden

too ? Why not then put all the weight straight on the horse's back ? In this way, all the agitations, the dance and play of life, all the growth, become in the end the Lord's own He becomes indeed the *mahesvara*, the Great Lord, of my life Growing in this way, all one's life is filled with God. Only the curtain of the body remains. When that is removed, *jiva* and *Siva*, the soul and the Supreme Self, become one Thus,

> " *Upadrashtaa anumantaa cha bhartaa bhoktaa mahesvarah*
> " The Lord is the witness, the assentor, the support, the enjoyer "

Thus progressively we should learn to experience the Lord At first the Lord watches as an impartial witness Then when the life of morality begins, He encourages us when good things take place through us When the devotee discovers that his own efforts are inadequate to cleanse the subtler impurities of the mind, and calls on him, this helper of the helpless rushes to his aid. After this, we have to give over to the Lord the fruits of action, and make Him the enjoyer And, in the end, we should surrender to Him the right to resolve and thus fill all our life with Him This is the ultimate goal of man, which the *sadhaka*, the seeker, has to reach, flying on the twin wings of *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*, of action and devotion

(74) Humility, absence of pride and other basic means to jnana

To achieve all this, the firm foundation of the practice of morality is indispensable We should discriminate between truth and falsehood, and follow only truth We should distinguish between the essential and the accidental and hold fast to the essential We should throw away the shell and keep the pearl In this way we should begin life Then with the help of one's own efforts and the grace of God, one should make further progress If throughout this process we practise discrimination between the body and

Self, it would be a help At such times I call to mind the sacrifice of Jesus They were hammering nails into His body. It is said that then the words came out of His mouth, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" But soon Lord Jesus collected Himself and said, "Thy will be done Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do" There is a great secret in this This shows clearly how far the Self should be separated from the body What the goal should be, and how near to it we can get, we can learn from the life of Jesus. We reach the point where we see the body being peeled off like armour, like the skin of a fruit Whenever I think of how the spirit should be distinguished from the body, the life of Jesus and this final scene appear before my eyes. How to be quite other than the body, how to sever the link with it, this the life of Christ shows us clearly

Until we acquire the power to discriminate between truth and falsehood, it is not possible to distinguish between the body and the Self This discrimination, this knowledge, should pervade every fibre of our being The word "*jnana*," we take to mean "to know" But to know with the mind is not *jnana*, true knowledge To stuff one's mouth with food is not the same as eating The food in the mouth should be masticated, passed through the gullet into the stomach, digested, converted into blood, and circulated throughout the body to nourish it Only then will it become real food. In the same way, mere knowledge of the mind is unavailing That knowledge should pervade all one's life and flow through one's heart It should express itself through the hands and the feet, the eyes and every other member One should attain a state when all the organs of perception and action work from knowledge Therefore, in the Thirteenth Chapter, the Lord has given a beautiful description of *jnana*. The marks of this *jnana* are like those of the *sthitaprajna*—humility, freedom from pride, *ahimsa*, straightness, tolerance Twenty

such qualities, the Lord enumerates He does not merely say that these qualities are called *jnana*, he says clearly that their opposites are *ajnana* The means to *jnana* are themselves *jnana* Socrates regarded good qualities as themselves *jnana* The means and the end are identical

These twenty means mentioned in the *Gita*, Jnanadev makes into eighteen These are described in the *Gita* in five slokas , but Jnanadev in his *Jnaneswari* describes them lovingly in 700 *ovis* (verses) He was eager that these good qualities should spread through society, that the power of the Lord who is Truth should prevail He has put all his experience into the description of these qualities This has been of inestimable help to the Marathi-speaking people These qualities pervaded Jnanadev's life A blow that fell on a buffalo caused a swelling on Jnanadev's back He had such fellow-feeling for all creatures It is out of this compassionate heart of Jnanadev that the *Jnaneswari*, his commentary on the *Gita*, emerged He has analysed these qualities thoroughly We should read his description of these qualities, meditate on them, and receive them into our hearts I consider myself fortunate in being able to enjoy this in Jnanadev's sweet language I shall deem it my good fortune to be born again if my tongue can utter this sweet language of his The substance is that we should make our lives grow more and more by distinguishing the body from the spirit and trying to fill our being with God

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CHAPTER XIV

THE GUNAS—BUILDING UP AND BREAKING DOWN

(75) Analysis of nature

Brothers, this Fourteenth Chapter in one sense completes the Thirteenth As a matter of fact, the Self has no need to do anything It is complete in itself The natural movement of one's soul is upwards But just as any object is dragged down when a heavy weight is tied to it, the burden of the body drags down the soul We saw in the last Chapter that, if by some means we could separate body and soul, we shall progress This may be very difficult, but the results too are great If we could only snap the fetters of the body that bind the feet of the soul, we shall experience a great joy Then we shall not be miserable because of the body's sufferings We shall become free If a man achieves victory over this body, who in the world can exercise power over him ? He who rules himself rules over the whole world Therefore, remove the domination of the body over the soul The pleasures and pains of the body are all alien and do not belong to us Between them and the Self there is not the slightest connection

To what extent we should keep all these pains and pleasures distinct from ourselves, I illustrated from the story of Jesus. He has shown us that, even when the body is breaking, the mind can be kept in peace and joy But this separation of the body from the Self is the result not only of discrimination, but of self-control Tukaram speaks of the strength of *vairagya* (non-attachment) in association with *viveka* (discrimination) Both are necessary *Vairagya*, non-attachment, is itself a kind of self-control or renunciation The Fourteenth Chapter describes the directions in which we should exercise self-control The oars propel the boat, but the rudder guides it. The oars and the rudder are both

needed In the same way, for separating the Self from the pains and pleasures of the body, both discrimination and self-control are needed

Just as the physician examines the patient's body and prescribes medicine, the Lord in the Fourteenth Chapter examines and analyses the whole of nature and diagnoses its maladies Here nature has been neatly classified There is a principle of division in statecraft If you can divide the forces of the enemy in front of you, you can readily gain victory The Lord does the same here

In you and me, in all beings, in all things moving and unmoving, nature is made up of three strands Just as there are three things in *ayurveda*, *kapha* (phlegm), *pitta* (bile) and *vata* (wind), nature is made up of the three *gunas*—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* All space is filled with a mixture of these three. A little more here and a little less there, that's all the difference. If we separate the Self from these three, we can separate it from the body To examine and conquer these three *gunas*, is itself the way of separating the Self from the body Through self-control one should conquer these, one by one, until one approaches in the end the most important thing, that which is beyond the *gunas*

(76) The cure for tamas—bodily labour

Let us take *tamas* first In the condition of modern society, we see terrible manifestations of *tamas*. Its chief manifestation is laziness. From this spring sleep and neglectfulness. Laziness, sleep and neglectfulness, if we have overcome these, we may take it that we have conquered *tamas* The most terrible of these is laziness The best of men may be ruined by it It is an enemy which will destroy all the peace and happiness of society It corrupts everyone, from the lowest to the highest It spares no one It lies in wait to pounce upon us At the slightest opportunity it comes and settles within us. A little more food than usual, and it drives us

to our beds If we sleep a little too much, our eyes are dull with sloth As long as we have not overcome this laziness, all our efforts are in vain But then we look eagerly forward to laziness. Our desire is that we should work day and night for a while, and save up some money so that we may spend the rest of our lives in leisure The purpose of earning a lot of money is to prepare for a life of laziness later We generally believe that leisure is necessary in old age But this is a mistake If we lead our life in the right way, we should be working even in old age With increasing experience, our usefulness should also increase Is that the time to seek rest ?

We must take good care that laziness has no chance King Nala was a great man And yet they say that when he washed his feet he left a little spot dry, and Kali (the evil spirit) entered through it King Nala was absolutely pure, clean in every way, but he left a tiny part of his foot unwashed And because of this touch of laziness, Kali entered into him. But we expose the whole body Laziness can enter in anywhere it likes When the body is lazy, the mind and intellect are lazy too Society today is built on this laziness A great deal of misery has arisen from this If we could cure this laziness, much, if not the whole, of this misery could be removed

At present, everywhere, there is talk of social reform. We are constantly disucssing the minimum comfort the common man should have, and the structure of society necessary to bring this about On the one hand there is excessive comfort, and on the other absolute privation On the one side wealth is piled up and for the rest there is a bottomless depth of poverty How can we remove these vast inequalities in society ? There is only one natural way for every one to get the necessaries of life , and that is for every one to shake off laziness and work hard Most of our misery arises from laziness If all were to resolve to work with their bodies, this misery will be no more

But what do we see in society today? On one side, men grown rusty and useless, the limbs and senses of the rich are eaten up with rust because they are never used On the other side are bodies worn thin by unremitting toil. But the tendency in society is for everybody to try and escape from bodily labour Even those who work hard do so without cheer They do so because there is no help for it Those who are educated and intelligent make all sorts of excuses for avoiding labour Some say, "Why waste time in bodily labour?" But no one asks, "Why waste time sleeping and eating?" When we are hungry we eat When we are sleepy we sleep But when the question of bodily labour arises, we ask, "Why waste our time? Why give so much trouble to the body? We are doing enough work, are we not, with our minds?" My dear Sir, you talk of working with the mind? Then, why not eat with the mind and sleep with the mind? Why not be content with "mental" sleep and "mental" food?

Thus there are two classes of men in society—those who work day and night and kill themselves, and those who do not lift a little finger A friend of mine once said to me, "Some are heads and some are trunks On the one hand, we have headless bodies, and on the other, bodiless heads. The trunks merely labour, while the heads merely think. Society has come to consist of Rahus and Ketus, who never meet" But if in reality they were separate heads and trunks, it would not matter For then some mutual arrangement could be made, as in the story of the blind man and the lame man The lame could lead the blind and the blind carry the lame But the heads and the trunks do not really form different groups Everybody has both a head and a trunk This combination of head and trunk is found everywhere. What then shall we do? Every one must shake off laziness

And to shake off laziness one must perform bodily labour ; this is the only way to conquer laziness If we fail to do this, we cannot but receive due punishment from Nature We have to endure it in the form of sickness and other miseries. Since we have the body, we must use it for labour. The time spent on such labour is not wasted It does yield results, We have sound health , our minds become bright and keen and pure In the ideas of many thinkers we see reflected their colics and head-aches. If these thinkers would work under the sun, in the open air, in the presence of Nature, their ideas would be strong and bright Experience shows that just as the mind is influenced by bodily sickness, so it is by bodily health. Instead of contracting tuberculosis and then going to Bhuwali and other health resorts in the mountains in search of sunlight and pure air, why not dig with a spade in the open, or water the garden, or hew wood with an axe, and keep healthy ?

(77) Another cure for tamas

The first thing is to conquer laziness , the second is to conquer sleep Sleep is in reality something holy The slumber of the saints who fall asleep, who work till they tire themselves out, is in itself a kind of *yoga* Such deep and peaceful sleep comes only to the fortunate Sleep must be deep and peaceful and undisturbed The value of sleep does not consist in its duration Sleep does not depend on the length of the bed or the period during which the person lay on it The deeper the well, the sweeter and purer its water So too, though one may aleep for a short while, if it is deep, it does good It is better to study with concentration for half an hour than to look at a book for three hours with a wandering mind Sleep too is like that It cannot be said that long sleep is always beneficial The sick man lies on his bed all the twenty-four hours of the day Though he clings to the bed, sleep does not approach him Only deep

dreamless sleep is true sleep Whatever the tortures of Yama after death may be, the tortures of one who cannot sleep and is troubled by dreams are certainly indescribable In the *Veda*, the *rishi* in his fear prays,

"*paraa duhsvapnyam suva*"

"I do not want, I do not want this terrible sleep" Sleep is meant to give rest, but if even in sleep all kinds of dreams and cares trouble us, where are we to find rest ?

How then are we to get deep, undisturbed sleep ? The means to shake off laziness will serve here too We should give ceaseless work to the body Then the moment we get into bed, we shall sleep like a corpse Indeed sleep is a brief death To attain this beautiful death we should make due preparation by day The body must be thoroughly tired out by toil The English poet Shakespeare says, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" One reason for it is that a king does not work with his body He who drowses by day will have to keep vigil at night. Not to use the mind and body by day, what is this but drowsing ? Later, when it is time for sleep, the mind is troubled by thoughts, and the body misses the pleasure of real sleep Then he sleeps late If this life which should be used for attaining the highest ends is consumed by sleep, when and how can we ever reach those ends ? If half of our life is spent in sleep, what good then do we get out of life ?

When much time is consumed in sleep, the third defect of *tamas* arises, namely, negligence and error The mind of the drowsy man cannot be strong or vigilant From this comes inattention Too much sleep leads to laziness and laziness to forgetfulness Forgetfulness is an enemy of the spirit Even in worldly affairs, forgetfulness causes nothing but harm But in our society, forgetfulness is regarded as quite natural No one thinks it is a great fault We make an appointment with somebody, and we don't go on time When asked,

we say "Good Lord, I forgot!" Both the speaker and the hearer are satisfied with this explanation. It looks as though people think there is no remedy for forgetfulness. But this forgetfulness does harm in practical as well as in spiritual matters. It is in truth a grave sickness. The canker consumes the mind and our life becomes hollow.

The laziness of the mind is the cause of forgetfulness. If the mind is alert, it cannot become forgetful. The recumbent mind cannot save itself from the disease of forgetfulness. Hence the Lord Buddha says,

"*pamaado maccuno padam.*"

Negligence, forgetfulness, is death itself. To get rid of this forgetfulness, we should conquer laziness and sloth. Work with your body. Be always alert. Let every action proceed from deep thought. Nothing should ever be done without thinking. Think before you act and think also after you act. Before and after action, everywhere, the Lord in the form of thought should stand beside us. If we acquire this habit, the disease of inattention will leave us. All our time should thus be regulated in the right way. If we keep an account of every moment, laziness cannot break into our life. It is in this way that we should try to conquer *tamas*.

(78) The cure for rajas—Living within the limits of svadharma

After dealing with *tamas*, we should come to grips with *rajas*. *Rajas* too is a terrible foe. This is only another aspect of *tamas*; it would be true to say that both these words stand for the same thing. After long sleep the body is restless, and after much movement it longs to stretch itself on the bed. From *tamas* proceeds *rajas*, and from *rajas*, *tamas*. Where one is present, you may take it that the other will be found too. Like bread in the oven with the flames below and the embers above, man is caught between *rajas* and *tamas*. *Rajas* says, "Come here, I shall toss you towards *tamas*," and *tamas* says, "Come here, I shall throw you to *rajas*."

Thus *rajas* and *tamas* help each other to ruin man. Just as the football is destined to get kicked about on all sides, man's life is spent in receiving the kicks of *rajas* and *tamas*.

The chief mark of *rajas* is the desire to do all sorts of things, an overweening ambition to do superhuman deeds. Through *rajas* we conceive a limitless desire for action, a consuming greed. Then we become unable to control the eagerness of our instincts and passions. We wish to remove the mountain here and fill up the lake there. We are impelled to drain the water from the sea and to submerge the deserts of the Sahara. We think of digging a Suez Canal or Panama Canal. We are never at peace unless we are breaking and mending. This is just like a child cutting up a piece of paper and making it into something else. Mixing this with that, drowning one thing in another, making something fly, changing one thing into another—these are the endless games played by *rajas*. "The bird flies in the air. Why should I not fly too? The fish lives in the water. Why should I not make a submarine and live in water too?"—thus, having got a human body, we find satisfaction in competing with birds and fish. Man wants to migrate to other bodies and experience their wonders. Someone says, "Come, let us go to Mars and see how people live there." The mind wanders all the time, as if innumerable desires, like so many demons, possessed it. We cannot bear to see things being where they are. We need some commotion, some excitement. We think, "When, with all my greatness, I am here, how could creation remain what it has always been?" We behave like a wrestler who, through excess of energy, dashes against a wall and kicks against a tree. Such excitement springs from *rajas*. Under its influence man burrows deep into the earth, brings out from its bowels a few stones and calls them rubies and diamonds. Possessed by the same agitation, he dives into the sea and, bringing up the rubbish from the depths, calls it a pearl. But because

it has no hole, he pierces one through it Now, where is it to be worn ? So he gets the goldsmith to pierce his nose and ears for him. Why does man fuss about in this fashion ? All this is due to the power of *rajas*

Another effect of *rajas* is absence of steadiness *Rajas* desires immediate results. When a slight obstruction is met with, the man gives up the path he has chosen and takes to another The man of *rajas* is ever busy taking up and abandoning things He changes his mind every day And in the end he finds himself empty-handed

raajasam chalam adhruvam

All the acts of the man of *rajas* are restless and uncertain He is like the child who plants a seed and, a little later, digs it up again to see if it has sprouted He expects results then and there He has neither confidence nor equanimity. He does not know how to plant his feet firmly He does some work here , he gets some fame there , then he goes off to a third place which is neither here nor there Today a reception in Madras, tomorrow in Calcutta, and the day after in Bombay or Nagpur His ambition is to get civic addresses from every municipality in the land He sees glory everywhere But staying in a place and doing some steady work, that is not his way The state of the *rajasik* man is thus really terrible

Under the influence of *rajas*, man indulges in all sorts of activities For him, there is nothing like *svadharma* The true pursuit of *svadharma* means the giving up of other varied activities The *karma-yoga* of the *Gita* is the *Rama-bana*, the arrow of Rama, for the destruction of *rajas* Everything about *rajas* is restless, unsteady If the rain falling on a mountain-top runs in all directions, it disappears, leaving no trace behind , the water is scattered and wasted But when the same water flows in one direction, it becomes a river A power springs from it It brings blessings to the

land So too, if a man does not scatter his energies in all sorts of efforts, but collects them and applies them in orderly fashion to a single task, only then can some good action take shape through his hands Hence there is great value in *svadharma*

We should think constantly of our *svadharma* and devote all our energies to it , we should have no thought for anything else This is the touchstone of *svadharma* *Karma-yoga* is not action which is great or weighty The *karma-yoga* of the *Gita* is something quite different Its distinctive virtue consists in progressively acquiring *chittasuddhi*, inner purity, through performing, without any thought of fruit, the *svadharma* that comes to one naturally and inescapably. Endless activities go on all the time throughout creation But *karma-yoga* means performing all actions with a special mental attitude To sow seed in a field and to scatter a handful of grain somewhere—these are entirely distinct actions The difference between them is great ; we know how much we gain by sowing the seed and what we lose by throwing it away The *karma* that the *Gita* teaches is like the sowing of seed There is an unlimited power in carrying out one's duty, one's *svadharma*. Here, no effort can be too great Here, there is no excuse for running around

(79) How to determine one's svadharma

"How then, is *svadharma* to be determined ?" If someone asks this, the easy answer would be, "It comes naturally, of itself" It is born into the world with us The very idea of going in search of it is strange When a man is born, his *svadharma* too is born with him As a child has no need to go in search of his mother, no one need go in search of *svadharma* It is ours, right from the beginning The world was there before we were born , it will be there when we are no more The mighty stream flowed before we were born into it and it will flow after we are gone. The service of the

parents to whom I was born, the service of the neighbours amongst whom I find myself, these duties come to me naturally. Then, my other obligations are matters of everyday experience I feel hungry, I feel thirsty So, to give food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty becomes my duty by nature Hence, it is never necessary to go in search of *svadharma*, of some form of service or compassion Wherever there is a search for *svadharma*, one may be certain that some *paradharma* or *adharma* is going on, that some one else's duty or some wrong action is being performed

The servant need not go in search of service ; it comes to him unsought But one thing he should remember ; that is, that everything that comes to him without an effort on his part is not necessarily right A farmer comes to me at night and says, " Come, let us shift that bund a few feet away. That will make my field larger There is no one there now. We can do it unnoticed " Although this task is assigned to me by my neighbour and comes of its own accord, it is not to be regarded as my duty, for it harbours *asatya*, falsehood

The reason why I like the system of the four *varnas* is that both naturalness and *dharma* are found in it If you give up *svadharma*, nothing will be gained Only those who happen to be my parents will be my parents I may say that I do not like them, but then, what can be done about it ? The parent's calling is naturally followed by the son It is the distinguishing feature of the *varna* system that the trade pursued by one's ancestors—if it is not opposed to morality—should be continued and developed This system has now fallen into decay Today it has become very difficult to uphold it. But it would be an excellent thing if only we could reform and revive it Today the first 25 or 30 years of a man's life are spent in learning a new job, a new trade. After learning it, the man goes in search of a place to serve in, to work in Thus

between what he learns in the first 25 years and his actual life there is no connection They say that he is preparing for his later life This amounts to saying that while he is learning he is not alive Apparently, life is to come later ! One is to learn everything first and begin to live afterwards, as if living and learning are two entirely different things ! But if this is not related to life, should we not call it death ? While the average Indian's expectation of life is 23 years, here we are, spending 25 years in just preparing for living In this way a lifetime is spent in learning a trade Then the actual practice of the trade begins In the result, the most energetic and enthusiastic years of our life are wasted. The energy and enthusiasm which should be used in the service of mankind and enrichment of life run to waste. Life is not mere play But it makes one sad to think that the first and most valuable part of life is spent in searching for a means of livelihood It is for this reason that Hinduism has discovered for us the system of *varna*

Let us leave aside the system of the four *varnas* In every country, even where this system does not obtain, every one has his own *svadharma* All of us are born into the stream, bringing with us our own special circumstances ; the duty called *svadharma* comes into being naturally We should not therefore adopt distant duties—it is wrong even to call them duties—however noble they may appear Often, it is distance that lends enchantment to the view Man is drawn by distant objects. Thick mist may surround a man where he stands But his eyes do not see it He points to a distant spot and says, "Look, there is thick mist there" Though there is mist everywhere, we do not see the mist just about us Distance has an attraction for man. What is by his side lies neglected in a corner and he has dreams of what is far away But this is a delusion and it must be abandoned. Though the *svadharma* that is mine is commonplace, incomplete

and uninteresting, yet because it is mine, it is the best for me ; it is the most beautiful to me When a man is drowning in the sea, it is only the log floating near him, however rough and gnarled, *that will save him. Does it matter that it is* not well-shaped, smooth and polished ? In the carpenter's shed there may be any number of beautiful, well-wrought pieces of wood But they are in the workshop, while he is struggling for life in the sea This rough, unshapely log alone can save him He must catch hold of it

In the same way, though the duty that falls to me may appear unimportant, it alone serves my purpose It becomes me to be absorbed in it In it I find my growth and development If I wander in search of other service, I shall miss both the old service and the new Man thus loses the inclination to serve Therefore, he should remain absorbed in the duty which is *svadharma.*

When we are absorbed in *svadharma*, *rajas* dries up , for then our mind is one-pointed Since it does not swerve from *svadharma*, the power of *rajas*, of distraction, slackens. When the river runs deep and still, however much its water rises, it is contained within the banks. So, too, the river of *svadharma* can hold all man's strength and power and energy. No matter how much energy we put into *svadharma,* it can never be too much If we spend all our energy in *svadharma,* that will be the end of the play of *rajas* ; our unsteadiness will be stamped out This is the way of conquering *rajas*

(80) Sattva and how to deal with it

What now remains is *sattva.* We should approach this matter with special care. How to distinguish the Self from *sattva* ? This is a matter for very subtle analysis We should not altogether destroy *sattva* While *rajas* and *tamas* must be utterly destroyed, the case of *sattva* is somewhat different When a big crowd is to be dispersed, the police are ordered to shoot below the knees The idea is that people are not

to be killed, but wounded. In the same way, *sattva* should be wounded, not killed. When *rajas* and *tamas* have disappeared, what remains is pure *sattva*. So long as we have a body, we have to take our stand on something. Then how long can we stand aloof from the *sattva* which remains after the disappearance of *rajas* and *tamas* ?

When we begin to identify ourselves with *sattva*, it drags down the Self from its nature of pure being. If the light of the lantern is to spread in all its brightness, the carbon deposit inside the glass has to be wiped off; if there is dust outside, that too should be washed. In the same way, the smoke of *tamas* surrounding the light of the Self should be wiped off. And then the dust of *rajas* should also be removed. At last the transparent glass of *sattva* will remain. Removing *sattva*—does it mean breaking the glass ? No, for the lantern would become useless if the glass is broken. The glass is needed to spread the light. Therefore, we should not break this clean bright glass; but to save our eyes from the glare, we may insert a piece of paper in front of it. The purpose of this is only to save the eyes from glare. To achieve victory over *sattva* means to remove our identification with it, our attachment to it. We have to make use of *sattva*, but it should be done in a disciplined, intelligent manner. We should make *sattva* free of *ahamkara*, of egoism.

How then are we to overcome the egoism, the pride, of *sattva* ? There is a way for this. And that is to make *sattva* firm and steadfast within us. By being constant in it, we shall cease to be proud of it. We should be constantly doing *sattvik* actions. We should make this part of our nature. We should make *sattva* not a guest who comes and goes, but a member of the household. We get proud of things that we do once in a way. We sleep daily, but we do not discuss it with others. If a patient had no sleep at all for a fortnight and then slept for a while, he tells everybody,

"I had some sleep yesterday" It seems to him quite an event A better example is our breathing We breathe all the twenty-four hours of the day, but we do not make much of it No one boasts of being a breathing animal If a piece of straw thrown into the Ganga at Haridwar floats down 1500 miles and reaches Calcutta, does it feel proud of its achievement ? It was only natural that it should float down with the current. If, however, one swims ten yards against the current, one considers oneself a hero. The truth is that, when an action is natural, we do not feel proud of it.

When some good action gets done through our hands, we are inclined to take the credit for it and feel proud Why ? Because it was not done naturally When a good action gets done through a child's hands, the mother pats it on the back. Otherwise, the child's back would ordinarily know only the touch of the mother's cane When in the thick darkness of the night there are a few glow-worms, look how proudly they show themselves off ! They do not display all their brightness at once The glow-worm twinkles and stops and twinkles again, as if it were playing hide and seek with light. But if its light were steady, it would not be so proud. Because it is constant, one notices nothing special in it If, in the same way, *sattva* shines constantly in all our actions, it would become our nature Not only is the lion not proud of its strength, it is not even conscious of it So too, *sattvik* conduct must be so natural and spontaneous with us that we do not even think of it It is natural for the sun to give light The sun takes no pride in it If anybody sets out to present it with a testimonial, it would say, "What is the special thing that I have done ? I do no more than give light My life consists in giving light If I didn't do that, I would die What else could I do ?" The state of the *sattvik* man should become like this *Sattva* should pervade every pore of his being When *sattva* becomes so much our nature, we would cease

to be proud of it This is one way to make *sattva* harmless, to achieve victory over it.

Another way is to give up even the attachment to *sattva* Egoism and attachment are two distinct things. But the difference between them is rather fine One can understand it more readily by means of an illustration Even when the egoism, the pride in *sattva*, disappears, the attachment to it persists Take breathing, once more, as an example Though we are not proud of our breathing, we still have a great desire to breathe It is impossible to hold the breath even for five minutes Though the nose is not proud of breathing, it goes on taking in air There is an amusing story about Socrates. His nose was flat and people used to laugh at it But the witty philosopher said, " Mine is the most beautiful of noses These nostrils are wide and take in a lot of air and therefore they are the best " It means that, though the nose is not proud of breathing, it desires to breathe In the same way we develop an attachment to *sattva-guna* Take, for example, kindness to all creatures Though this is a useful quality, we should be able to keep away even from this attachment We should have kindness, but not attachment to kindness

It is through this *sattva-guna* that saints show the way clearly to mankind Because of their compassion, their bodies become the common possession of all As flies cover the the lump of jaggery, all the world wraps the saint in affection. There is so much love in the heart of the saint that the whole world begins to love him The saint gives up attachment to his body, and therefore the whole world becomes attached to it and cares for it But even from this attachment the saint must free himself The world's love, this great fruit,—even from this he should keep the Self separate He should never feel that he is special or unique In this way, *sattva-guna* should be digested and disposed of in the body.

Conquer egoism first, and then attachment Egoism is conquered by constancy in *sattva*, attachment is conquered by giving up desire for results, and dedicating to the Lord even the fruit attained through *sattva-guna* When *sattva* becomes steady in our lives, the fruit will come before us, sometimes as success, sometimes as fame But even this fruit we should regard as something trivial. Not even one of its fruits does the mango tree eat However good, however sweet, however juicy the mango, not eating it is sweeter than eating it Renunciation is sweeter than enjoyment Dharmaraja in the end cast away the joys of *svarga*, heaven, which he had earned by a lifetime's practice of virtue With this he crowned his life of sacrifice He had the right to taste the sweetness of the fruit, but if he had tasted it, it would have come to an end *Kshine punye martyalokam visanti*—"When the merits earned are exhausted, they re-enter the world of mortality" He is caught in this wheel again. How great was this sacrifice of Dharmaraja! It stands for ever before my eyes Thus by constant practice of *sattva* we should achieve victory over its egoism Standing aloof, and dedicating all fruits to the Lord, we should free ourselves from attachment to *sattva* Only then can we say that we have achieved victory over *sattva-guna*

(81) The Final Stage—Self-realisation and refuge in bhakti

Now to the last matter Though we become full of *sattva*, though we have vanquished egoism, though we have given up all attachment to fruit, so long as this body lasts we shall be subject now and again to the assaults of *rajas* and *tamas* We might for a while think that we have overcome these *gunas*, but they come back again and again and exert their power Therefore we should be ever vigilant As the waters of the sea rush in and make inroads into the land, the flood of *rajas* and *tamas* enters our minds and eats into them There should not, therefore, be the smallest chink through which

they can enter We should keep constant watch No matter what care and skill we exercise, there is danger, so long as we have not attained Self-realisation, the vision of the Self Therefore, we should endeavour, no matter by what means, to attain Self-realisation

Self-realisation will not come from mere vigilance How then will it come ? Will it come through exercises ? No. There is only one way, and that way is to be devoted to the Lord, to yearn for Him with all one's heart We may overcome *rajas* and *tamas*, we may become steadfast in *sattva* and give up attachment to its fruit, but this is not enough The task is not complete till Self-realisation is attained In the end, therefore, the grace of the Lord is essential And through real devotion of the heart, we should qualify for the grace of the Lord I know no other means for this. At the end of this Chapter, Arjuna puts the same question, and the Lord answers, " With mind absolutely one-pointed and without desiring the fruit, be devoted to Me and serve Me He who serves Me thus crosses *maya*, illusion, and reaches the other shore It is not easy by any other means to cross this dense *maya* " This is *bhakti's* easy method And this is the only way

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CHAPTER XV

THE YOGA OF COMPLETENESS—SEEING THE LORD EVERYWHERE

(82) Bhakti is not different from the way of effort

In one sense we have reached the other shore of the *Gita* to-day In the Fifteenth Chapter all the ideas of the *Gita* find their fulfilment The Sixteenth and the Seventeenth Chapters are in the nature of supplements, and the Eighteenth Chapter serves as the conclusion Hence the Lord at the end of this Chapter calls it *sastra*, science He says,

" *iti guhyatamam saastram idamuktam mayaa anagha.*"

" Thus, O flawless one, have I taught you this science, the greatest of secrets."

And he says this not because it is the concluding Chapter, but because in it the science and the philosophy of life that have been taught till now find completion In this Chapter, *paramartha*, the supreme truth, is revealed. The whole essence of the *Vedas* is here. The function of the *Vedas* is to awaken in man the awareness of *paramartha.* Because this is done in this Chapter, it has come to be honoured as " *vedasara*," the essence of the *Veda*

We saw in the Thirteenth Chapter the need for separating the Self from the body In the Fourteenth we analysed the efforts necessary for this Through self-control we should give up *rajas* and *tamas* , we should develop *sattva* and at the same time overcome attachment to it, renounce the fruit of it In the end, it is said that, in order to achieve complete success, Self-realisation is essential ; but without *bhakti* Self-realisation is unattainable

The way of *bhakti*, however, is not different from the way of effort. To show this, at the very beginning of the Fifteenth Chapter, the world is compared to a mighty tree This tree has great big branches nourished by the three *gunas* It is

said right at the beginning that this tree is to be cut down with the axe of desirelessness and detachment. It is clear that the discipline described in the previous Chapter is gone over again in the beginning of this. By eliminating *rajas* and *tamas*, and nourishing *sattva*, we should develop ourselves. One is destructive work, the other constructive. Both together form a single path. Removing weeds and sowing seed are two parts of the same job. Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana are three brothers in the *Ramayana*. Kumbhakarna is *tamas*, Ravana is *rajas*, Vibhishana is *sattva*. The *Ramayana* of these three is built into our body. And in this *Ramayana* too, Ravana and Kumbhakarna are destined to destruction. What remains is the Vibhishana-principle. And if it takes refuge in the feet of the Lord, it can give you strength and lead you to the goal. And therefore we should make it our own. This we have understood in the Fourteenth Chapter. But it is repeated in the beginning of the Fifteenth Chapter. By the axe of non-attachment, cut off the world of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Control *rajas* and *tamas*. Develop *sattva* and become pure. Conquer even the attachment to *sattva* and remain free. The *Gita* is here placing before us the ideal of the lotus flower. In India the most noble things of life are compared to the lotus. The lotus is the symbol of our culture. The lotus, though pure and holy, is untouched even by these qualities. Purity and non-attachment are its two-fold power. We compare every part of the Lord's body with the lotus. We speak of His lotus-eyes, lotus-feet, lotus-hand, lotus-face, lotus-navel, lotus-heart and lotus-head, and by this comparison we impress on our hearts the truth that everywhere non-attachment is found only in association with beauty and holiness.

This Chapter is intended to complete the discipline mentioned in the previous Chapter. When in our efforts *bhakti* and awareness of the Self are combined, they become com-

plete *Bhakti* is only a part of the way of effort. Both Self-realisation and *bhakti* are two halves of the same process. The *rishi* says in the *Vedas* ·

> "*yo jaagaara tam richah kaamayante*
> *yo jaagaara tamu saamaani yanti*"

"The *Vedas* love him who is awake, they come of themselves to see him" In other words, to him who is awake comes *Vedanarayana*, the Lord in the form of the *Vedas*, *jnana* comes to him, *bhakti* comes to him. *Jnana* and *bhakti* are not different from the way of effort It is shown in this Chapter that these two principles make effort sweet Therefore let us listen with one-pointed mind to this character of *bhakti* and *jnana*.

(83) Through bhakti effort becomes easy

I cannot cut up life into bits I cannot separate *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti*, nor are they separate For example, look at the cooking in this jail A few of us do the work of preparing food for the six or seven hundred people here. If some of these cooks do not know their job, they would spoil the food The *chapatis* would be underdone or burnt black But let us take it that they have good knowledge of the art of cooking Even so, if there is no love, no *bhakti*, in their hearts ; if they do not feel, "These *chapatis* are meant for my brothers, for Narayana They must be well cooked. This is the service of the Lord," if they do not feel this, they are unfit for the task in spite of all their knowledge of cooking Cooking requires not only knowledge, but love too Unless there is the *rasa* of *bhakti* in the heart, there can be no *rasa*, no taste, in the food. That is why a mother's cooking is particularly tasty For who else would do this with so much love and care ? And *tapasya*, self-sacrificing austerity, is also necessary for it. How can this work be done without enduring heat and accepting hardship ? From this we conclude that, for success in any action, love, know-

ledge and labour, all three are necessary All the activities of life stand on these three If one of the legs of a tripod is broken, it cannot stand , all three legs are needed The very name conveys the structure. Such too is the condition of life. *Jnana*, *bhakti*, *karma*, knowledge, love and constant effort, are the three legs on which life stands On these three pillars we should construct our Dvaraka, the city of nine gates These three legs together make up one thing The image of the tripod fits exactly Even if you logically distinguish between *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma*, you cannot divide them in experience The three together make up one great entity.

But it does not follow that there is no special quality in *bhakti* When the principle of *bhakti* enters into any action, it is only then that it appears easy "To appear easy" does not mean that there will be no difficulty It only means that the difficulty will seem not a difficulty, but, on the contrary, a pleasure Thorns appear as flowers What is meant by saying that the way of *bhakti* is easy ? It means that, as a result of the attitude of *bhakti*, the burden of action is not felt. The hardship of action disappears No matter how much work we do, we feel as if we have done no work Jesus Christ says, "Moreover, when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance , for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast Verily I say unto you, they have their reward But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face , that thou appear not unto men to fast" The idea is, we should be so filled with *bhakti*, so absorbed in it, that we do not feel the hardship

Do we not say that a patriot walked smiling to the gallows ? Sudhanva smiled in the cauldron of boiling oil, while his lips uttered the names of Krishna, Vishnu, Hari, Govinda. It only means that, because of the power of *bhakti*, one does not feel even the most terrible pain It is not difficult to

push a boat floating in the water , but how hard to drag the same boat on land, on rocks ? If there is water under the boat, we can cross over to the other shore without effort In the same way, if our life's boat floats on the waters of *bhakti*, we can sail gaily in it But if life is dry and the way dusty, stony, full of pitfalls, it would be indeed hard to drag the boat along The principle of *bhakti*, like water, makes easy the voyage of our life.

Bhakti makes the path easy, but without Self-knowledge there is no hope of transcending the three *gunas* Then, what is the means to Self-knowledge ? It is to make *sattva* one's own by constancy in it and to try through *bhakti* to overcome the egoism of *sattva* and attachment to it If we adopt this means and strive constantly, unremittingly, then the vision of the Self will one day come to us Till then we cannot come to the end of our efforts This is a matter concerning the highest goal of our life Attaining the vision of the Self is not mere play. We cannot expect to find it by the wayside We should maintain a constant stream of effort The condition of spiritual life is the resolve, " I shall never give the slightest room to despair. I shall never—not even for a moment—sit still in despondency." There is no other means of spiritual progress The seeker sometimes asks in weariness,

> " For your sake I have practised *tapas* and self-control. Tell me what more I should do, and how much longer I should strive "

But this question is beside the point We should practise *tapas* and self-control until they become our very nature. To ask, " How long, till when, am I to perform *sadhana* ?" —such language is improper in *bhakti*. *Bhakti* never permits diffidence and despair to arise. There would be no sinking of the heart in it Noble ideas which can bring progressive joy and enthusiasm to *bhakti* are revealed in this Chapter

(84) The triad of seva : master, servant, means of service

The universe presents countless objects to our eyes We can divide them into three classes As the *bhakta* wakes up in the morning, only three objects appear before him First his mind goes to the Lord Then he makes preparations for His worship "I am the servant, the devotee, He is my Lord, the master whom I serve"—these two are ever present Now what remains is the rest of creation, which is the means for the worship The whole of creation is intended to provide the flowers, the fragrance, the incense and the lights There are only three things, the servant devotee, the Lord to be served, and the creation which is the means for this service It is this lesson that is taught in this Chapter But when one worships some image, all the objects of creation do not seem to him means of worship He goes and fetches a few flowers from the garden, gets hold of a couple of incense sticks and prepares some food-offerings He wishes to choose a few objects But there is no need for such selection, according to the comprehensive teaching of the Fifteenth Chapter All the means of *tapas*, all the means of *karma*, are means of service to the Lord Some of them we would call flowers, some incense and some food-offerings In this way, we should make all actions means of worshipping the Lord It is thus we should look at it There are only these three things in the world To the way of non-attached effort which the *Gita* tries to impress upon our hearts, it gives a form full of *bhakti* Thus, it takes away from action the character of action and renders it easy

When in an *ashram* some one has to do a lot of work, it never occurs to him to complain, "Why should I alone do so much work ?" There is a beauty in this If the worshipper gets four hours instead of the usual two for his worship, would he complain, "Good Lord, I had to worship for four hours today !" ? On the contrary, he would rejoice all the

more One has this experience in an *ashram* We should have the experience everywhere in life Life should be consecrated to service He is *Purushottama*, the Supreme Person, who receives our service , and I, ever absorbed in His service, am *aksharapurusha*, an imperishable person "*Aksharapurusha*" means the eternal servant who knows no weariness and serves from the beginning of creation He is like Hanuman who is ever standing before Rama with folded hands He is an absolute stranger to laziness Like Hanuman he stands, living for ever, absorbed in service

Such a lifelong servant is called *aksharapurusha*, the unchanging, the immortal Person The Supreme Self lives , and I, His servant, I too live for ever If the Master exists, then I too exist. Let us see who gets tired first, He by accepting or I by offering, service If He has taken ten *avatars*, I too have had ten *avatars* When He is Rama, I am Hanuman When He is Krishna, I am Uddhava Every time He is born, I am born too Let this happy rivalry go on ! The soul serves the Lord in this way, *yuga* after *yuga*, aeon after aeon, and is never destroyed This is the *aksharapurusha* He, the Supreme Person, is the Master , I am His servant, His slave This *bhavana*, this attitude, should be kept steady and unchanging in the heart This creation changes every moment and shines in manifold forms , we should make it the means of worship, the instrument of service. Every act we perform is worship of the Lord.

He that is served, the Supreme Self, is *Purushottama*, he that serves, the soul, is the imperishable person ; but the means of service, creation, is *kshara*, perishable There is deep significance in its being perishable This is not a fault in creation, it is its glory Because of this, creation is ever new Yesterday's flowers will not do for today , they are fit only to be cast away Creation is perishable ; it is a good thing that it is so This is the glory of service Every day fresh

flowers are available for worship In the same way, I will take on new bodies and render service to the Lord Every day I shall give new forms to the medium of worship It is because it is transient that it is beautiful Today's moon is not the same as yesterday's Every day it acquires a new grace What joy it is to behold the waxing moon two days old ! How it shines upon the forehead of Lord Siva ! The beauty of the eighth-day moon is quite different Then, only a few choice pearls are seen in the sky During Full Moon, because of the brightness, not a star is to be seen Then we see in the moon the face of the Lord And majestic is the beauty of the New Moon night How serene and undisturbed its calm ! The sovereign brightness of the moon withdrawn, countless stars, small and large, blossom out in perfect freedom The freedom of *amavasya*, the New Moon night, has full play The moon, with its proud display of brightness, is not there It has become one with the sun which gives it light It has joined the Lord Then it seems to show how the soul can surrender itself without being the cause of any sorrow to the world The moon's form is transient, mutable ; but it gives joy through all its many forms

It is its mutability that makes creation immortal The form of creation flows like a gurgling stream If the Ganga does not keep flowing, it would become a stagnant pool The water flows in an unbroken stream But it is for ever changing One drop replaces another And so the water lives One finds joy in an object because it is new In summer, we worship the Lord with flowers In the rainy season, we offer the tender green *dub* grass In autumn, it is the beautiful lotus. With the flowers and the fruits that are in season, the Lord is worshipped That is why worship is bright and ever fresh One never gets tired of it. If we write out the letter ' A ' for a child and tell him to write again and again over it, thickening the lines, it simply bores,

him He cannot understand why the lines should be made thick. He blunts the point of the pencil and does it as quickly as possible But later he learns new letters and new combinations of letters He begins to read many kinds of books. He experiences the masterpieces of literature. Then he has boundless joy It is the same with worship. Because the instruments are ever new, the enthusiasm for worship grows The habit of service develops

Because of the transitoriness of creation we have fresh flowers every day. The cremation ground is near the village, that is why the village looks beautiful. Old people go, and new children are being born Creation is renewed every day. If we abolish the cremation ground out there, it would come in and occupy the house You would get tired of seeing the same people day after day It is hot in summer, the earth is parched But do not be afraid. All this will change. This burning heat is necessary for us to enjoy the pleasures of the rainy season. If the earth were not hot and dry, the first shower would make it slushy And neither grass nor grain would grow on it Once I was wandering about on a hot summer day My head was hot I was filled with joy A friend said to me, "You will get sunstroke" I said, "The earth below is burning Let this clay doll too burn a little" What joy to have a cold shower on a burning head! But he who is not scorched in the summer sun will bury his head in his books even when it rains He will remain in his room, in his grave He would not dance with joy under this vast sacred shower out in the open But our *maharshi* Manu was a great enjoyer and lover of Nature He says in his *Smrti*, "When it rains, declare a holiday" When it is raining without, who would sit within and chant Vedic verses again and again? When it rains, we should sing and dance. We should become one with Nature. Then, earth and heaven meet and mingle This beautiful sight fills us with joy. It is as if creation itself is teaching us.

The truth is that the mutability and transience of creation means freshness in the medium of worship Thus we have creation forever presenting us with an ever-new progeny of means , the immortal servant, standing ever ready to serve with girt loins , and the Supreme Self to be served. Now let the game go on The Lord Supreme gives me means which are endlessly new and wonderful and He takes from me service which springs from love. Giving me all sorts of things, He lets me play He uses me in all sorts of ways If only we can develop this attitude in life, what happiness would be ours !

(85) Egoless service is bhakti

The *Gita* wants every action of ours to be filled with *bhakti* It is good that we worship God for half an hour now and then Morning and evening, when the beautiful light of the sun spreads out its colours, it is an excellent idea to steady one's mind, to forget the world for a while and meditate on the Infinite We should not give up such good habits But the *Gita* is not satisfied with them. All our actions from morning till night should become worship of the Lord Bathing, eating, or sweeping, we should think of the Lord While sweeping, we should have the *bhavana*, the attitude, that we are cleaning the courtyard of the Lord, the master of our life All our actions should thus become acts of worship Once this attitude becomes yours, observe what a vast difference it makes to your life How carefully we choose flowers for worship, how gently we carry them, so that they may not get bruised or crumpled or faded ! For fear that it might lose its freshness, we do not take the flower near our nose. This same attitude, this *bhavana*, should enter into all our daily actions In this very village of mine, my *Narayana*, my Lord, plays about in the form of this my neighbour Therefore I shall keep this village clean and tidy. The *Gita* wishes to give us this attitude Its great desire is to make

all our actions into worship of the Lord To a King of Sciptures like the *Gita*, a half-hour *puja* yields no satisfaction Its keen desire is that the whole of life should be filled with the Lord and be a form of worship

The *Gita* teaches the *purushottama-yoga* and brings to perfection the life of *karma* He is *Purushottama*, the Lord, receiving service , I am His servant ; and all this creation the instrument for His service If once we realise this relationship, what more do we need ? Tukaram says,

"Once the vision is attained, I shall serve
I shall ask for nothing more, my Lord"

Then continuous service will proceed Then there is no such thing as "I" "I" and "mine" are swept away, and then whatever remains is for the sake of the Lord Life is lived entirely for the good of others There is nothing else. This is what the *Gita* teaches again and again , I shall remove from myself all sense of "I" and surrender my life to the Lord and fill it with *bhakti* The Lord to serve, I the servant and Creation the means Where is the talk of possession now ? Life has no care any more

(86) The mark of jnana—seeing the Self in all three

Till now we have seen that we should thus fill *karma* with *bhakti* but there should be in it *jnana*, too , else the *Gita* would not be satisfied This does not mean that these three are different things. We distinguish them only in speech. *Karma* means *bhakti* There is no need to bring *bhakti* from elsewhere and put it into *karma* It is the same with *jnana*. How shall we find *jnana* ? The *Gita* says, "By seeing *purusha*, the Self, everywhere You are the servant, the Self eternally serving He is the *Purushottama*, the Self eternally served. And this creation that bears endless new forms, that gives to us all kinds of means of service, that keeps ever flowing, this too is *purusha*, the Self"

What is meant by this attitude ? Everywhere we should assume the attitude of pure, flawless service. If your sandals squeak, give them some oil In them too is something of the Lord , so attend to them with care Apply oil also to the *charkha*, the instrument of service Listen, it calls for attention. It says, " *neti*, *neti*, I won't spin " This *charkha*, this instrument of service, is also *purusha* Take good care of its belt, its sacred thread Regard all creation as filled with *chaitanya*, as alive and aware Don't set it down as inert The *charkha* that sings out, " Om,"—is it inert ? It is an image of the Supreme On the New Moon day of *sravan*, we shed our pride and offer worship to the ox This is a great matter. Remembering this observance every day, let us look after our oxen and get appropriate work from them The *bhakti* that rises in your heart should not stop with that day The ox too is an image of the Lord The plough, and all these other implements of agriculture, keep them in good order. All the tools of service are holy How broad is this vision ! Worship does not mean offering flowers and consecrated rice, and sprinkling rose water To keep the vessels clean and polished like crystals, that is worship of the vessels. To clean the lamp is to worship it To whet the scythe and make it ready for reaping is worship To lubricate the rusty hinge of the door, this is worship too We should use all things with this attitude We should keep all the materials of service clean and in good condition The truth is that I am the *aksharapurusha*, the imperishable Self, He is *Purushottama*, the Self Supreme, and this Creation, the means of service, this too, is *purusha*, the Supreme Being Once we have the vision of the play of *chaitanya*, of intelligence, everywhere, we can say that *jnana* too has entered our action

First we put *bhakti* into *karma*, devotion into action Now, we add *jnana* to it, we make the divine elixir which will transform life The *Gita* has in the end brought us to the way

of service filled with *advaita*, the sense of oneness, and leaves us there Wherever we look in creation we see three *purushas*. *Purushottama*, the one Supreme Person, has assumed these three forms In reality, the three together constitute one Person There is nothing but oneness Here the *Gita* has led us to the highest peak *Karma, bhakti, jnana* have all become one Man, God and Creation have all become one. Between *karma, bhakti* and *jnana* there is now no conflict In his *Amrtanubhava*, Jnanadev gives an example dear to Maharashtra

> "Out of rock we chisel the Lord, His temple and His followers Why should not the acts of *bhakti* be like this too ?"

Out of the rock, we make the temple, and the throne and the image of God Out of the same rock, we make the devotee standing in front, and carve too the fruit he offers One big rock assumes all these different forms Why should not the same thing happen with *bhakti* too ? Even in the relationship of Master and servant, why should there not be oneness ? This outward creation, these materials of worship, distinct though they be, why should they not become of the nature of the Self ? The three *purushas* are after all one To combine the streams of *jnana, karma* and *bhakti* into a mighty river of life—this is the perfect *purushottama-yoga* The Master, the servant, and the instruments of service—they are all one. Now let us play the game of devotion and love

He, on whose heart is impressed this *purushottama-yoga*, he alone performs true *bhakti*—

> "*sa sarvavid bhajati maam sarvabhaavena bhaarata.*"
>
> "Knowing all and being all, he worships me, O Bharata."

Such a man, though he is a *jnani*, remains a pure *bhakta*. Where there is knowledge, there is love too Knowing the Lord and loving Him are not two different things If we have the knowledge that the *karela* (the bitter gourd) is bitter, then

we have no love for it. There may be one or two exceptions; but whenever bitterness is experienced, we feel disgust. The moment we hear of sugar-candy, our tongue waters, love for it wells up. But with the Lord, to know Him and to love Him are the same. But can one compare the sweetness of the Lord's form with so common a thing as sugar-candy? The moment we have the knowledge of the sweet Lord, the same instant love for Him springs in our heart. The birth of knowledge and the birth of love are not two different events. There is no point in the discussion whether there is room for *bhakti* in *advaita*. Jnanadev says,

"Only know Vitthal
This is *bhakti*, this is *jnana*."

Bhakti and *jnana* are two names of one thing.

The work that gets done when the supreme *bhakti* pervades life is not different from *bhakti* and *jnana*. *Karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* together make a single beautiful form. And from it will spring, naturally, wonderful service full of love, full of knowledge. One loves one's mother; but this love should express itself in action. Love is constantly dying, expending itself, and coming out in the form of service. The outer form of love is service. Love adorns itself with innumerable acts of service and comes out dancing. Where there is love, knowledge comes and joins it. When I am to serve a person, I should know what service would please him. Or else, it would be disservice or wrong service. Love must have knowledge of that which it would serve. To spread through action the power of love, knowledge is needed. But at the root of this knowledge, there must be love. Without it, knowledge would be useless. An act performed through love is very different from an ordinary act. As the son comes home tired from the field, the mother looks at him with natural love and says, "You are tired, my child." Look how much power there is in this slight action. Weave all the

actions of your life with the warp and woof of *bhakti* and *jnana* This is what is called *purushottama-yoga.*

(87) The essence of all the Vedas in the palm of my hand

This is the essence of all the *Vedas* The *Vedas* are infinite. But the distilled essence of the infinite *Vedas* is this *purushottama-yoga* Where are these *Vedas* ? Their ways are strange. Where is their essence ? At the very beginning of this Chapter it is said, "He whose leaves the *Vedas* are" My brother, the *Vedas* fill every leaf of this tree. The *Vedas* are not hidden in the *Samhitas* (collections of *mantras*) or in your books and treatises They pervade the whole universe Shakespeare speaks of

"Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones .. . . . "

The idea is that the *Vedas* are neither in Sanskrit nor in the *Samhitas*, but in all Creation If you serve, they will appear before you We say, "*prabhaate karadarsanam*"—"looking at one's palm early in the morning" All the *Vedas* are in that palm and they say, "Serve" Consider whether your hands worked yesterday, whether they are fit to work again today and whether they carry the marks of service. When the hands are worn out with service, then the destiny that Brahma ordained for you becomes clear This is the meaning of "looking at one's palm in the morning"

People ask, "Where are the *Vedas* ?" My brother, they are in your hands It is said Sankaracharya had knowledge of all the *Vedas* in his eighth year Then poor Sankara must have been a dull fellow He needed eight years ! I am the *Vedas* living and awake All the generations that have gone before have found their fulfilment in me I am the fruit of this long line From the seed of the *Vedas* came this fruit In my fruit are gathered the seeds of endless *Vedas* The *Vedas* within me have increased five-fold and fifty-fold The truth is, the essence of the *Vedas* is in our hands We

have to build our lives on the foundations of service, love and knowledge This is what is meant by saying that the *Vedas* are in our hands The meaning that I see is the *Veda*, not something, somewhere, outside The saints, who are the embodiment of service, declare, "It is we who know the meaning of the *Vedas*" The Lord says, "Me alone all the *Vedas* know I am the light of the *Vedas*, their essence, the *Purushottama*" If we can make this essence of the *Vedas*, the *purushottama-yoga*, our own, if we can make it part of our lives, what joy it would be ! The *Gita* shows us how the *Vedas* themselves are revealed in the actions of such a man. In this Chapter is present the whole essence of the *Gita* The whole of its teaching is revealed here All of us should labour day and night to inform our lives with it. What else ?

CHAPTER XVI

A SUPPLEMENT —THE CONFLICT BETWEEN DIVINE AND DEMONIC TENDENCIES

(88) The dawn of Purushottama-yoga : attainment of divine qualities

In the first five Chapters of the *Gita*, we saw the whole scheme of life and the means of achieving life's purposes. Then, from the Sixth to the Eleventh Chapters we had a vision of *bhakti* In the Twelfth Chapter we compared the *saguna* and *nirguna* forms and saw the qualities of the *bhakta* Throughout this Chapter we analysed thoroughly the two principles of *karma* and *bhakti*. Then there remained the third principle of *jnana* and this we studied in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Chapters We learnt how to separate the Self from the body, how to master the three *gunas* and in the end see God everywhere The Fifteenth Chapter gave us the complete science of life, which reaches perfection in *purushottama-yoga* After that, nothing remains

I cannot bear to see *karma*, *jnana* and *bhakti* separated. To some seekers established in *karma*, this is the only thing that appears worth while Others regard *bhakti* as an independent method and place all their emphasis on it Still others choose *jnana* Life does not mean mere *karma* or mere *bhakti* or mere *jnana*. I do not like this "mere" philosophy And I do not accept the opposite view that would combine *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* Nor do I like the utilitarian philosophy of a little of *bhakti*, a little of *jnana* and a little of *karma* The theory of successive stages—first *karma*, then *bhakti*, then *jnana*—this too I do not accept. I wish to experience that that which is *karma* is *bhakti* and *jnana* too

The sweetness, the shape and the weight of a cake are not things apart When we put it into our mouth, we eat up its form, absorb its weight and taste its sweetness. The three

are mingled together In every particle of the sweet cake is found its form, its weight and its sweetness It is not as if the shape alone is found in one particle, the mere weight in another, and the sweetness by itself in a third. In the same way, the spirit should pervade every action of our life—every action should be full of service, full of love and full of knowledge Every part of life should be filled to overflowing with *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* This is called *purushottama-yoga*

It is easy to say that the whole of life should be given over to the spirit, but if we begin to think of what these words mean, we shall see that, in order to render absolutely flawless service, we have to act in the confident belief that our hearts are moved by pure *jnana* and *bhakti* Therefore, this ultimate state in which *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* are inseparably one is called *purushottama-yoga* Here we reach the goal of life.

Now, what is said in the Sixteenth Chapter ? Just as, before the sun rises, its light begins to spread, so too, before the *purushottama-yoga* full of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* rises in our lives, the dawn of good qualities shines forth The Sixteenth Chapter describes the light which is to shine in the perfect life It also describes the darkness with which it has to battle before it emerges As proof of the existence of something unseen, we wish to have some visible symbol. How are we to know that service, love and knowledge have entered our life ? When we have worked hard in the fields, we harvest the grain, measure it and bring it home This Chapter indicates how in the same way we can assess our *sadhana*—what experiences we went through, what good qualities we acquired, what good habits we formed, how far in reality our life was made up of service The aim of this Chapter is to enable us to measure how far the art of life has developed and progressed To this growing art of life, which waxes like the moon, the *Gita* gives the name of " *daivi*

sampat," divine attainments The opposite tendencies it calls "*asuri sampat*," demonic attainments The Sixteenth Chapter describes the conflict between the divine and the demonic qualities

(89) The armies of violence and non-violence

Just as in the First Chapter the Kaurava army stood face to face with the Pandava army, so here, the divine army of good qualities is brought face to face with the demonic army of bad qualities From very early times there is the tradition of representing through symbols the struggle that rages between good and bad in the heart of man In the *Vedas*, Indra against Vritra, in the *Puranas*, *devas* against *danavas*, in the epic, Rama against Ravana; in the scriptures of the Parsis, Ahuramazda against Ahriman; among the Jews, Jehovah against Satan, in Islam, Allah against Iblis—such conflicts are found in all religious traditions While in poetry concrete things are described metaphorically through subtle objects, in religious works subtle inward movements are described by giving them clear concrete forms In one, the gross is described through the subtle, and in the other, the subtle in terms of the gross This is not to say that the battle described at the beginning of the *Gita* is merely imaginary, it may have been a historical event But the poet here uses it to achieve his chosen purpose. Through the image of a battle he explains what a man should do when his mind is deluded by conflict of duties. The Sixteenth Chapter describes the conflict between good and evil. The *Gita* uses the allegory of war.

Kurukshetra is both outside us and within us When we observe it carefully, it is the battle raging within that we see assuming shape in the world without He who seems to be my enemy is only the passion in my heart taking on a shape and standing, out there Just as my image, handsome or ugly, appears in the mirror, it is the bad and good thoughts

of our mind that appear without as our enemies and friends. As we see in dreams what we have seen while awake, so we see in the world without what is in our hearts Between the battle within and the battle without, there is little difference. To speak the truth, the real battle is only within ourselves.

Within us there are good qualities on one side and bad ones on the other. And both armies are well arranged. An army needs a commander The good qualities have their own commander named "*abhaya*," fearlessness Fearlessness has been given the first place in this Chapter. This is not mere accident, but deliberate Without truth good qualities have no value ; but then, for truth, fearlessness is essential. In an atmosphere charged with fear, good qualities cannot grow , in fact thay become themselves bad qualities, and good efforts and tendencies get weakened Fearlessness is the commander of all good qualities , but the army has to be watched front and rear, and on both sides The direct attack will of course be in front, but one may also be stealthily set upon from behind. While, in front, Fearlessness stands alert, Humility guards the rear This is an excellent arrangement. Here twenty-six qualities are enumerated If we have twenty-five of these qualities, but have *ahamkara*, egoism or pride in these, there is every chance of stealthy attack from behind in which we shall lose all that we have now That is why the virtue called Humility is stationed in the rear. In the absence of Humility, there is no knowing when victory will turn into defeat. Thus by placing Fearlessness in front and Humility in the rear we can develop all the good qualities It would not be wrong to say that the twenty-four good qualities placed in between these two great virtues, are for the most part synonyms of *ahimsa* Compassion, tenderness, forgiveness, serenity, patience, non-violence, loyalty, all these are only other names of *ahimsa* In the twin qualities of *ahimsa* and *satya*, non-violence and truth, all good qualities are

included; they are the essence of them all. But the case of fearlessness and humility is different Fearlessness makes advance possible and humility ensures safety With our stock of *satya* and *ahimsa*, we should advance fearlessly. Life is vast We should travel in it without let or hindrance If, lest we should make a false step, we remain ever humble, no danger will come to us Now we can proceed joyously, applying truth and non-violence everywhere. The truth is that *satya* and *ahimsa* grow only through fearlessness and humility

While, on one side, the army of good qualities is thus arrayed, on the other, the army of bad qualities also stands ready. There is no need to say very much about bad qualities like vanity and ignorance Our whole life is founded on vanity And of ignorance it can be said that it has become a beautiful excuse, which we trot out on every occasion, almost as if ignorance were anything but a crime. But the Lord says, "Ignorance is a sin" Socrates says just the opposite of this In the course of his trial he says, "What you think is a sin is only ignorance, and how are you going to punish ignorance ?" But the Lord says, "Ignorance too is sin" According to legal theory ignorance of Law cannot establish innocence Ignorance of God's law is also a great crime Both the Lord and Socrates mean the same thing The Lord tells us how to regard our own ignorance, and Socrates tells us how to regard the sins of others Other people's sins we should forgive But it is a sin to excuse even ignorance in oneself. We should not allow the least vestige of ignorance to remain in ourselves

(90) The growth of ahimsa : four stages

The divine qualities on the one side, the demonic on the other—thus the two armies stand arrayed against each other. Of these, we should leave the demonic qualities and join the divine qualities The divine qualities of *satya* and *ahimsa*

have been developed from time immemorial And between then and now, during all this time, too, there has been great progress. But, even so, there is plenty of room for further progress We have by no means reached the end of the process As long as we belong to a social organism, there will be endless opportunity for development Though the individual development is complete, there still remains the growth of society, the nation and the world Offering his own development as manure, the individual should help society and the millions of people in the nation to grow Though from the beginning of time *ahimsa* has been developed by man, the process of evolution is still going on

It is worth studying how *ahimsa* has developed We would then understand how the life of religion has developed step by step and what scope there is for further growth In the beginning the non-violent man had to consider how to save himself from the attacks of the violent At first the *kshatriya* class was set up for the protection of society, but it went too far and started devouring society itself Then the non-violent *brahmins* began to consider how society could be saved from these power-mad *kshatriyas* Parasurama, though a devotee of *ahimsa* himself, resorted to violence He set out to destroy the *kshatriyas* For removing the violence of the *kshatriyas*, he himself adopted violence Though this was an effort of *ahimsa*, the attempt did not succeed Twenty-one times he destroyed the *kshatriyas* ; still they survived, because the method was wrong in its very basis He who set out to destroy the *kshatriyas* became a *kshatriya* himself and added to their numbers How then could the *kshatriya* caste be destroyed ? He himself had become a *kshatriya*, and the seed of violence survived If one cuts down the trunk and branches of a tree, but preserves the seed, one will only see the tree sprouting up again and again. Parasurama was no doubt an excellent fellow, but his attempt was strange

Himself becoming a *kshatriya*, he tried to clear the world of *kshatriyas* He should have begun with himself He should have cut off his own head first When I point to Parasurama's fault here, it does not mean that I am more intelligent than he Compared with him, I am a child , but I stand on his shoulders, and can therefore see much further without effort The very basis of Parasurama's action was wrong It is not possible to remove violence when one is oneself full of violence On the contrary, one only adds to the number of the violent But this was not realised at the time The great men of those days, men of non-violence, acted according to their lights Parasurama was a great exponent of non-violence for that age He did not practise violence for the sake of violence He did violence in order to establish non-violence

But that experiment failed. Then came the age of Rama Then the *brahmins* began to think about it again They had already given up violence , they had resolved never to commit violence themselves How then to escape the attacks of *rakshasas* ? They thought, " Here are these *kshatriyas* who practise violence anyhow , why should not the *rakshasas* be destroyed through them ? One uses a thorn to remove a thorn We shall stand aside " That is why, to protect his *yajna*, sacrifice, Visvamitra took Rama and Lakshmana and had the *rakshasas* destroyed by them Now we think, " The *ahimsa* that cannot protect itself, that cannot stand on its own legs, this lame *ahimsa*, how can it sustain itself ?" But men like Vasishtha and Visvamitra saw nothing wrong in finding protection in the strength of the *kshatriyas* But what if there was no *kshatriya* like Rama ? Then Visvamitra would have said, " I would rather die than commit violence " For the experiment of ending violence through violence had already been attempted Now this much had been clearly accepted that they would not give up their own non-violence If they could not find a *kshatriya*, they would prefer to die To that

extent the ground had been prepared In the *Aranyakanda* of the *Ramayana*, there is an episode Walking in the Dandaka forest, Rama asks, "What are these heaps ?" The *rishis* answer, "These heaps are made up of the bones of brahmins, of non-violent brahmins When the violent *rakshasas* attacked them, they did not resist. They lost their lives It is their bones that are piled up here." In this non-violence one sees the self-sacrifice of the brahmins; but, at the same time, they had a wish that others would protect them Where there is such weakness, non-violence cannot reach perfection.

In later times, good men went further and tried a third method They resolved, "We shall never seek the help of others to save ourselves Our *ahimsa* is enough to protect us That is the only true defence" But this experiment was conducted on the individual plane They perfected this individual method, but it stopped with the individual If violent men attacked society and men went and appealed to those saints and asked, "What shall we do now ?", it is doubtful whether they would have given a definite answer. These saints, who had practised *ahimsa* in their own lives to perfection, would only have said, "Brothers, we can do nothing" It is childish impertinence on my part to find fault with the saints in this way, but I am only describing what I see, sitting on their shoulders May they forgive me for this ! And they will, for great is their forgiveness. It would not be true to say that they were never moved to use the method of *ahimsa* on the social plane It may be that the conditions of the time did not seem propitious And so they experimented individually, by themselves But it is out of such experiments, conducted separately by individuals, that a science is born Science arises from the combined experience of many

After these individual experiments of saints, today we are conducting the fourth experiment And that is, the whole

of society joining together to oppose violence with the methods of *ahimsa* Thus there have been four experiments so far. In each of them there have been and there are imperfections. This is inevitable in the course of progress But it must be said that each method was perfect for its time And ten thousand years later, people will see even in our non-violent struggle an element of violence Many more experiments in pure *ahimsa* will of course take place yet Not only *jnana*, *karma* and *bhakti*, but all good qualities are evolving. There is only one perfection, and that is the Supreme. The *purushottama-yoga* of the Bhagavad Gita is complete, but in individual life and social life these qualities are yet to develop fully.

Words too keep growing The *rishis* are considered to be the seers of the *mantras*, not the makers of them For it is not as if the meaning they found in the *mantras* is the only true meaning They had one vision of it To us, coming after them, a more evolved meaning may appear That we can see a little more than they is not due to any special merit in us, for we only build on the foundations they laid I have been speaking so much on the growth of *ahimsa* alone. That is because, if we take the common essence of all these good qualities, we shall find that it is *ahimsa* Moreover, we are engaged today in a non-violent struggle And so we considered the evolution of this principle

(91) A great experiment in ahimsa: giving up meat-eating

Till now we saw one aspect of *ahimsa*, how a non-violent man defends himself against the attacks of the violent, how *ahimsa* has evolved in the struggle between individuals But there is also a conflict between man and animal Man has not yet been able to put an end to conflict between human beings, and he lives by filling his stomach with the flesh of animals Men cannot stop fighting with one another even now, nor can they live without eating helpless lower

animals which also live. Man cannot yet live like a man. Though he has existed for thousands of years, he has not yet learnt how to live But, now, even in this matter there is a progress There was a time when man lived on animals only But even then, the more intelligent, the nobler ones, did not like this. They laid down a restriction that, if they had to eat meat, they would eat only the flesh of animals offered in sacrifice. The intention behind this was to limit violence Many people gave up meat altogether , but those who could not do so were permitted to offer it to the Lord in sacrifice, do a little penance, and then eat it It was thought then that, as a result of the condition that one could only eat meat in a *yajna*, a sacrifice, violence would be controlled. But later on, *yajna* became common and whoever felt like it performed a sacrifice and ate the meat Then the Lord Buddha went a step further. He said, "If you want to eat meat, eat it But don't bring the name of God into it" The aim of both these statements is the same, that violence should be controlled, that somehow people should be drawn into the path of self-control Both from the performance of *yajnas* and from non-performance of them, we learnt to give up meat. Thus, little by little, we gave up eating meat

In the history of the world it is only in India that this great experiment has been attempted Millions of people here have given up meat-eating If today we do not eat meat, it is no mark of our greatness Because of the merit of our ancestors, we have got used to this Why, we are surprised when we hear or read that the *rishis* of old ate meat We say, "What nonsense! How could *rishis* eat meat? It's impossible." On the other hand, their greatness is that, though used to taking meat, they had self-control enough to give it up. We do not have to go through all that trouble now. We have, without effort on our part, inherited their virtues

In Bhavabhuti's "*Uttararama Charita*," Vasishtha arrives at the hermitage of Valmiki To welcome him a young calf

is killed. A small boy says to an older boy, "The big bearded tiger that came to our *ashram* today has eaten up our little calf, hasn't it" And the bigger boy says, "Hush! He is the great *rishi* Vasishtha You mustn't say such things." The fact that they ate meat in ancient times, and that we don't do so now, does not mean that we are better than they The fruit of their experience has come to us easily. We should now progress further We should make an effort to give up even milk altogether It is degrading for man to drink the milk of other animals Ten thousand years hence the men of the future will say of us, "Why did our ancestors have to take a solemn vow not to drink milk? Ram! Ram! How could they bring themselves to drink milk? Were they such savages?" We should fearlessly and humbly make experiments and progress steadily The tree of truth should throw out new branches There is plenty of room for development. No quality has as yet evolved to its fullness.

(92) The three asurik ambitions : Power, Culture, Wealth

We should develop the divine tendencies and keep away from the demonic The Lord describes the demonic qualities so that we may keep away from them. There are three important things here. The essence of the demonic character is contained in "power, culture and wealth." Such people believe that theirs is the only great culture and their overweening ambition is to thrust it on the whole world To the question, "Why should our culture be thrust on others?" they answer, "Because it is the best." "How is it the best?" "Because it is ours" To the *asurik* man as to the *asurik* empire, these three things are necessary.

The *brahmins* too believe, "Ours is the best culture of all. Our *Vedas* contain all wisdom Vedic culture should be victorious all over the world" "*Agrataschaturo vedaan prishthatah sasaram dhanuh*," "the four *Vedas* in front, the bow and arrow ready at the back" Thus equipped, fly the flag

of your culture everywhere. But where there is the strung bow and arrow at the back, the poor *Vedas* in the hands are as good as finished and done with. The Muslims too think that what is found written in the Quran is alone true The Christians think likewise. They feel that no matter how virtuous a non-Christian may be, he can never enter Heaven unless he has faith in Jesus. They have provided only one door to the temple of God, and that is the door of Jesus. People build for themselves houses with many doors and windows, but for the house of their poor, dear Lord they provide only one door Everybody imagines,

> "I am the noblest born ; my wealth is great
> Where is my equal?"

Who am I? I belong to the line of Bharadvaja I can trace without a break my lineage from that great *rishi* People in the West feel the same way They say, "Noble Norman blood runs through my veins" Don't we in our country trace a *guru-sishya* line ? It begins with Siva, the *adiguru*, the first teacher. And then, Brahma or somebody else ; then Narada and Vyasa , then some other *rishi* , then, in between, ten or fifteen other names , and after them, my *guru*, and then, finally, myself Through this pedigree, we try to prove our own greatness and that of our culture My dear fellow, if indeed your culture is great, let your conduct reveal it Let its splendour pervade your life But this doesn't happen The desire to spread throughout the world the culture that we do not practise in our own life, in our own home—this way of thinking is *asurik*.

"My culture is the noblest," we say It is just like this to think, "I am the only person fit to hold all the wealth of the world I want all the world's wealth, and I will make it mine." And why should I make it mine? To divide it equally among all In order to do this, I first bury myself in this wealth. Akbar too said in the same way, "Why don't

these Rajputs join my empire? If there is one big empire, peace would be established." Akbar sincerely believed this. The *asuras* of our day too think that they should collect all the wealth of the world. What for? To distribute it again to everybody

And for this I need power. All power should be concentrated in one hand. The whole world should come under my control "Self-rule" is my rule. To obey me is freedom. In this way, culture, power and wealth—these three are encouraged by the *asurik* temperament.

There was a time when the *brahmins* ruled society. They made the *sastras* and the codes of law; kings bowed before them The age passed and gave place to the age of the *kshatriyas*. Then horses roamed free over their empire, and they went in triumphal progress in all four directions. And this *kshatriya* culture too went as it came The *brahmin* said, "I am the giver of knowledge, the others are takers Who but me can be the *guru*, the teacher?" The *brahmins* were proud of their culture The *kshatriyas* set store by power, saying "I killed this man today, I shall kill some other man tomorrow.' Then came the age of the *vaisyas*. "Hit the back if you like, but not the belly"—this is the whole philosophy of the *vaisya*. His heart is in his stomach. "This wealth is mine, and that, too, shall become mine"—this is his prayer, this is his resolve. Do not the English tell us, "If you want *svaraj*, take it But give us the right and facilities to sell our manufactured goods here. Then by all means preserve your culture Keep your loincloth and sit there with your culture."? The wars of today are all waged for the sake of trade. This age too will go, it has already begun to depart. All these are forms of the *asurik sampat*.

(93) Self-control, the way to shake off desire and anger

We should push away from us our *asurik* tendencies. Briefly, *asurik sampat* means desire, anger and greed. These

three are forces that set the world dancing Let us put an end to this dance. We must give it up Anger and greed spring from desire When circumstances favour desire, greed arises , when they obstruct desire, anger arises Again and again the *Gita* tells us to beware of these three This is what is said at the end of the Sixteenth Chapter, that desire, anger and greed are the three broad gateways of Hell They are thronged by crowds coming in and going out The roads to Hell are very wide There is room for many motor cars ; you can find many companions on the way But the path of truth is narrow

How then are we to escape from desire, anger and greed ? By accepting the way of control of the senses This is the path laid down in the *sastras* The *sastras* are nothing but the experience of the saints. The *sastras* are made up of the experience the saints gained through their efforts Therefore hold fast to this principle of self-control Do not have any doubt or fear that it will fail Please do not raise such arguments or questions as, " What will happen to the world if desire and anger disappear ? Should not the world go on ? Should there not be at least a little desire, a little anger ? " There is already plenty of desire and anger, my brothers, a great deal more than you need Then why do you confuse your minds needlessly ? There is a grain or two more of desire, anger and greed than you wish for Do not worry yourself that the human race will come to an end when desire dies No matter how many children you produce, a day will come when the very name of man will disappear from the earth The scientists say so. The earth is slowly getting colder At one time the earth was excessively hot Then there were no living creatures on it Life had not been born. A time will come hereafter when the earth will become excessively cold and all life will perish This may take millions of years No matter how prolific you are, that final dissolution

is certain. The *avatars* of the Lord are for the preservation of *dharma*, not for the preservation of numbers. As long as there is one man devoted to *dharma*, one man who is afraid of sin and steadfast in truth, there is no cause for worry. The Lord will take care of him Whether thousands of people are alive or dead makes no difference when their *dharma* is dead.

Remembering all this, live an ordered life in creation, controlling your senses. Do not follow your own whims. The good of the world does not mean doing the things the world wants you to. To go on increasing the population, or piling up wealth, is not progress. Developing is not a matter of numbers If society multiplies beyond limit, people would start killing one another. Man would first feed fat on animals and birds Then, perhaps, on his own children. If he accepts that there is any value in desire and anger, there is not the least doubt that man will end up by eating man. Doing good to the world means showing mankind the pure and beautiful path of virtue If by freeing itself from lust and anger the race of man disappears from the earth, it will reappear on Mars There is no need to worry. The unseen God pervades the universe He will take care of us Therefore, first let us become free. There is no need to look very far into the future Do not worry about all creation and the entire human race Increase your own moral power. Fling aside desire and anger "Free your own neck from the noose first" This would be achievement enough

There is joy in standing on the shore and watching from afar the surge of the sea of *samsara* But what joy is there in the sea for the man who is drowning in it, with his eyes and nose full of water ? The saints stand on the shore and enjoy the sight of the sea Unless we bring into our lives this saintly attitude of remaining aloof from *samsara*, we can have no joy. Be like the lotus-leaf, and let the water roll off

you. The Buddha has said, "The saints stand on the summit of the hill, and look down at *samsara* and find it trivial" If you, too, climb to the top and look down, this vast expanse would appear trivial And your mind will not be drawn to *samsara*

The Lord, in this Chapter, exhorts us to give up the demonic and acquire the divine qualities. Come, let us make the effort.

CHAPTER XVII

ANOTHER SUPPLEMENT : PROGRAMME FOR THE SEEKER

(94) A disciplined life frees the mind

Dear brothers, we are slowly approaching the end of our study. In the Fifteenth Chapter, we saw the complete science of life. The Sixteenth Chapter was a supplement. In the mind of man and in society which is its image, a great war rages between two attitudes, two ways of living, two sets of qualities. Of these, we should develop the divine qualities, —that was the teaching contained in the first supplement, the Sixteenth Chapter. Today, in the Seventeenth Chapter, we come to the second supplement. Looked at in one way, we can call this the *yoga* of "*karya-krama*," of regularity in action. The *Gita* here indicates our daily routine. Today we shall examine the programme for every day.

If we wish our nature to be free and joyous, we should bring our activities into some order. Our daily actions should proceed on an accepted basis. It is only when our life proceeds within bounds and in an accepted, disciplined way, that the mind can be free. The river flows at its own sweet will, but the flood is bound in the two banks. If it were not thus bound, its freedom would be wasted. Keep before your eyes the example of the *jnani*, the seer. The sun is the teacher of the seers. The Lord taught *karma-yoga* first to the sun. Then, from the sun, it came to Manu, that is, to man the thinker. The sun is free and independent. He is regular— it is in this regularity that the essence of his freedom lies. We have seen from experience that, if we are in the habit of walking regularly on the same road, we are able to think about other things while walking, without paying attention to our steps. If we walk on a new road every day, all our attention is concentrated on the road. Then the mind can

have no freedom It follows that, in order that life may be not burdensome but joyful, we should limit our activities and order them aright.

Therefore the Lord sets down in this Chapter a programme of action At our birth we are born into three orders The *Gita* has laid down this programme in order that man may fulfil the functions of these three orders and make his life happy What are these three ? The first is the body that wraps us The second is the vast universe that surrounds us, the boundless creation of which we are a part The society into which we are born, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our neighbours—these form the third Every day we use these three orders, we wear them out The *Gita* wishes that we should try unremittingly to replenish what is lost through us, and thus make our life fruitful We should perform without any thought of self these three sets of duties we were born with

Yes, we should fulfil these duties, but what is the method of doing so ? The method is to combine *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, sacrifice, the giving of gifts and penance These words we know, but not their meaning. If we understand their meaning and bring it into our lives, body, Nature and society, all three orders, will benefit, and our whole life will shine with freedom and joy.

(95) The yoga of activity—three kinds

To understand this, let us first see what "*yajna*" means Every day we make use of Nature If a hundred of us crowd together in one spot for a day, that part of Nature appears spoilt We foul the atmosphere and mess up the whole place In eating food we consume creation, little by little We should make up for it. It is for this that the institution of *yajna* is created What is the purpose of *yajna* ? To make up for the harm that has been caused to creation—this is *yajna* We have been ploughing the earth for thousands of years

and thus impoverishing it. *Yajna* says, " Return its strength to the soil. Plough the land and feed it with sunlight. Give it manure "

To make good the loss, that is one purpose of *yajna.* Another purpose is to purify the things we use. We use the well and make the place all round it dirty and slushy. This part of creation, thus disfigured, we should clean up. We have to remove the dirt We should make up for loss and we should purify In addition to these, we should do a little direct construction. This too is included in *yajna.* If we wear cloth, we should spin a little every day and make something new Growing cotton, raising crops, spinning and weaving, all these are acts of *yajna*, sacrifice Whatever we do in a *yajna* should not be done for our own sake, but with the feeling that it is one's duty to make up for the loss that one has caused This is not altruism. We are, from the beginning, debtors. We are born into the world with a load of debt on our heads Whatever we do to discharge this debt is *yajna* or service, not altruism. By this service we must discharge our debt. At every step we use the order of creation Therefore we have to do *yajna* to replenish loss, to purify things and to create new things.

The second order is our human society. Father, mother, teacher, friend, all these toil for our sake. " *Dana* ", the rite of giving, was instituted in order to discharge this debt to society This, and not doing good to others, is its meaning. I have received from society boundless service. When I came into this world, I was weak and helpless This society brought me up so that I, then so little, have grown so big Therefore I in my turn should serve society. " Doing good " is serving someone from whom we have received no service But in this case we have already received everything from society. The service that we render to free ourselves from this debt to society, that is *dana* To help human society to progress

is *dana* The effort made to replenish Nature's loss is *yajna* ; the help given through body, mind, substance and other means to discharge the debt to society is *dana*.

Besides these, there is a third order, that of the body. This too wears out day by day We wear out by use our mind, our knowledge, our senses *Tapas*, penance, has been prescribed in order to remove the defects and distortions that arise in the body.

Thus it is our duty to act in such a way that the work of these three orders—Nature, society and the body—may proceed smoothly and efficiently We create any number of good and bad institutions , but these three orders were not instituted by us They have come to us naturally They are not put together by any man Therefore it is our natural *dharma* to replenish through *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* the wear and tear in these three orders If we act in this way, all the energy in us will be harnessed to this purpose There will be nothing left for other things. We shall need all our energy to keep these three orders—Nature, society and the body, —in good condition If we too could say like Kabir, " Lord, I am returning the shawl just as you gave it to me See it for yourself," that would be reward enough But in order to deserve this reward, we should bring into actual practice the triple programme of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*

Here we have regarded *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* as if they were three different things, but to tell the truth, there is no difference between them For the three orders of Nature, society and the body are not absolutely distinct Society is not outside creation ; nor for that matter is the body. These three together make up the beautiful order of Nature. The creative effort we make, the *dana* we give and the *tapas* we perform, all these can be called *yajna* in the comprehensive sense The *Gita* in the Fourth Chapter speaks of *yajnas* like the *yajna* of *dravya*, matter, and that of *tapas*, austerity.

All the service we render to these three orders will take the form of *yajna* But it is necessary to keep this service disinterested In this there can be no room whatever for expecting any fruit, for we have already received the fruit. The burden of debt has already settled on our heads. What we have taken, we must now return. Through *yajna* we maintain equilibrium in Nature, through *dana* in society, and through *tapas* in the body Thus this programme is intended to preserve the state of balance in all the three orders Through this, purity is attained and evil thoughts eliminated.

For the sake of this service, it is necessary to take some food Eating too is a part of *yajna*. The *Gita* calls this eating of food "*aahaara*," offerings. As the engine needs coal, the body needs food for its fuel. Although this offering of food is not in itself *yajna*, it is clearly an element in the fulfilment of *yajna* To fetch a flower from the garden and place it on the head of the image is worship ; but so too is working in the garden to produce the flower. Any action performed for the sake of *yajna* is also a kind of worship. It is only when we offer food to the body that it will serve our purpose. Any action which is a means to the performance of *yajna* is itself *yajna*. The *Gita* calls these actions "ancillary actions," acts of *yajna* The offerings I make to the body to sustain it for service are *yajna*. The food accepted for the sake of service is holy

Again, all these things must spring from sincere devotion. The inward attitude should be one of surrendering all service to the Lord This is a great thing Without an attitude of surrender to the Lord, one cannot be full of service. If we forget what is most important, surrender to the Lord, we shall get nowhere

(96) Making the means pure

But then, when can we surrender all our actions to the Lord ? Only when they are *sattvik*, purified. Then,

and only then can we do so. *Yajna*, *dana*, *tapas*, all should be made pure. We saw, in the Fourteenth Chapter, the philosophy of making our actions *sattvik*. In this Chapter, the *Gita* explains its application.

In this plan of purification, the *Gita* has two aims. The service that is being rendered to the world through my external actions of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, can itself, viewed from within, be described as spiritual exercise The service of creation and the development of the spirit do not demand two different courses of action service and spiritual growth are not two different things For both, the effort made, the action performed, is the same. And even this action has at last to be surrendered to the Lord Service to Society, spiritual effort, and the attitude of surrender to the Lord,—this *yoga*, this composite result, must flow from the same action

Two things are needed to make *yajna sattvik* They are avoiding fruitless actions and also the desire for fruit If there is expectation of fruit in *yajna*, it becomes *rajasik*; if it is fruitless, it becomes *tamasik*

Spinning is *yajna*. But if we do not inform it with spirit, our mind is not one-pointed and the *sutra-yajna* becomes lifeless. Unless the mind within joins the hand working in the outer world, the whole action departs from the prescribed order And disorderly actions become lifeless. Into such action, *tamas* enters Through it, no noble thing can be created From it, no fruit will grow. Even though there is no desire for fruit in performing *yajna*, it ought to yield noble fruit If the mind is not in the action, if the spirit is not in it, then it becomes a burden How then can it yield good fruit? If the outward action goes wrong, it must be because the mind did not accompany it Therefore pour your soul into the action Bind the outward with the inward In order to discharge our debt to creation, we must

produce noble fruit One should not allow action to become fruitless, that is why it is essential that inward feeling should combine with outward action according to rule and order.

When, in this way, disinterestedness finds place in our hearts and fruitful action goes on according to rule, our mind and heart will become increasingly pure. What is the touchstone of inward purity? Examine the outward action If that is not flawless and beautiful, we may take it that there is impurity in the mind too When does beauty come out in action? On the action performed with pure heart and unstinted effort, the Lord sets the seal of His approval, His grace When the Lord, well-pleased, touches the action with the hand of love, beauty appears there Beauty is the grace of the Lord granted to pure and unremitting effort When the sculptor gets absorbed in carving, he feels that this beautiful image was not shaped by his hands. As he goes on chiselling, at the last moment, somehow, from somewhere, beauty comes of itself and settles there. Without *chitta suddhi*, inward purity, how can the art of God manifest itself? The beauty, the loveliness of the image, is nothing but the beauty of the sculptor's soul that has been poured into it The image is an image of our mind. All our actions are images of our mind If our mind is beautiful, its image in the medium of action will also be beautiful We should judge the purity of outward action by the purity of the mind, and the purity of the mind by outward action

One word more! And this is, in all these actions *mantra* too is necessary Action without *mantra* is meaningless. While spinning, bear this *mantra* in your heart: "Through this thread I tie myself to the poor in this land" If we work for hours on end, but without this *mantra* in our heart, it is all wasted The mind will not attain purity through this action Consider spinning If we apply to the action this *mantra*, that the Lord hidden in the cotton manifests Himself in the form of the thread, the action will then become

truly pure and beautiful It will become worship, service to the people and to God In the tiny mouth of the child Krishna, Mother Yasoda saw the whole of Creation In this thread too, charged with *mantra*, you will begin to see the whole universe.

(97) Purity in Food

For true service, purity in food is necessary. As is the food, so is the mind The food we eat should be regulated Not what food we take, but how much we take, is the more important question It does matter what food we choose to eat, but it matters even more that it is in right measure. Whatever we eat will necessarily have its effects What do we eat for ? That good service may be done Eating too forms a part of *yajna* Look on food with the *bhavana* that it is necessary in order to make the *yajna* of service yield fruit Food should be pure and clean The food that a man eats can never be too pure. Our society has performed enough *tapas* for the sake of purity in food In India, many efforts have been made towards this Thousands of years have passed in these experiments We cannot tell how much *tapas* has gone into them It is only in India that many entire communities have freed themselves of meat-eating. Even those who eat meat give it a secondary place and do not take it every day , they even feel that they are doing something improper , these too have in their minds given up meat It was to restrict meat-eating that *yajnas* were first developed, and it was again for the same purpose that *yajna* was later abandoned The Lord Krishna changed the very meaning of the word "*yajna*" Sri Krishna increased the importance of milk The wonderful things that Krishna did are not few , but which Krishna are the people of India mad after ? The name most dear to the people of India is "Gopala-Krishna" The young and the old, every one, knows and loves Krishna, the cow-herd, with the flute at His lips,

in the midst of His cows The great benefit of learning to cherish the cow was that people gave up meat-eating. Cow's milk came to be valued, and meat-eating fell off in importance

Still, it is not as if perfect purity in food has been attained We should now make efforts for further progress The Bengalis eat fish, and so many people are surprised at this But it is not right that we should condemn them for this Bengal produces only rice and that does not provide enough nutrition for the body We shall have to conduct experiments to find out what vegetable substitutes can be found for fish For this purpose men of heroic sacrifice will be born It is such people who lead society forward The sun keeps burning, and that is why, wherever we go, we are able to maintain our normal temperature and remain alive. When in a society shining suns of *vairagya*, desirelessness, appear and, breaking the bonds of environment with the power of faith, fly without wings into the sky of the ideal, then we ordinary people acquire the little *vairagya* that is useful in the world I often think, on such occasions, of how much *tapas* the *rishis* had to perform to stop meat-eating, and how many lives had to be sacrificed

By now our society has to this extent attained purity in food This treasure which our ancestors have earned through endless sacrifice, let us not lose it Do not let go this special excellence of Indian culture It is not enough that we somehow manage to exist That is easy Even the animals do so Then, are we like the animals ? No, there is a difference The growth of this difference is the growth of culture. Our country has conducted strenuous experiments in giving up meat-eating Let us continue them. At any rate, let us maintain our present position and not go back

I stress this because at present a great many people have begun to show a liking for meat Today, the cultures of the

East and of the West are influencing each other. I am confident that the ultimate outcome of this will be good. The impact of Western culture disturbs our unthinking beliefs. When blind faith is shaken, there is no harm in it What is good will remain, and what is bad will be destroyed But blind unbelief should not replace blind belief It is not as if belief alone can be blind, that it has a monopoly of blindness. Unbelief too can be blind

People have begun to think again about meat-eating. The appearance of a new idea, whatever it may be, delights me. It shows signs of wakefulness But if one wanders around rubbing one's eyes, not yet fully awake, one may stumble and fall Therefore, until one is fully awake and can see steadily, it is good that one keeps in check one's hands and feet Consider well ; look carefully up and down, from right and left, inside and out, and all round. Use the scissors of the mind on *dharma* The *dharma* that can be cut up by thought is worthless , let it go That which your scissors cannot cut, but which on the contrary shatters your scissors, that is true *dharma* *Dharma* is not afraid of thought. Therefore, think ; but do not rush into action If you do something while only half awake, you will fall down. However powerful the thought, forbear from action for a while Exercise discipline Do not throw away the virtue stored up for you

(98) The Gita's programme for harmonious living

Purity of food keeps the mind pure The body gains strength One is able to do good to society Both the individual and society are happy There will be no conflict in a society where *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* are found, where actions take place according to rule and are accompanied by *mantra*, contemplation As, when two mirrors face each other, each is reflected in the other, in the same way, true to the laws of reflection, the individual and society will

mutually strengthen peace. My happiness is that of society, and society's is mine We can examine each of these and find that they are both one We shall experience *advaita*, oneness, everywhere Separateness and disloyalty disappear. The *Gita* shows us the way of establishing such an order. If we follow the *Gita's* plan in our daily programme of action, how good it would be!

But today there is conflict between the individual and society.

How this conflict can be resolved is the talk everywhere. Where does the individual stop and society begin? Which is primary and which secondary? Which is superior? Upholders of individualism regard society as lifeless When the sepoy comes before him, the commander speaks to him gently. He would even use the honorific plural. But his words of command to the regiment would be peremptory. It is as if he considers the regiment as a lifeless log to be kicked about hither and thither on the field. We see, here too, how the individual is alive, but the collective is lifeless. Here you are, two or three hundred people in front of me. Whether you like it or not, I go on speaking at you; I keep saying whatever occurs to me. I treat you as if you were lifeless But if any of you approach me, I shall have to listen carefully and answer questions after a great deal of thinking. But now, I make you sit still here for hours together.

"Society is inert, the individual is conscious"—so say some. Others magnify the collective. My hair has fallen, my hand is broken, my eyes are gone, my teeth have dropped out In addition to this, one lung is useless If in spite of it all I live, it is because each organ, looked at separately, has no life of its own If any one of them perishes, the whole does not perish. The collective, the body, continues to live and move Thus we have two contradictory ways of thinking The conclusions you come to, depend on your

point of view. Creation assumes the colour of the spectacles you wear.

Some give more importance to the individual, some to society. This is because of the spread in society of the concept of struggle for existence. But is existence meant for struggle? Rather than this, why don't we die? Conflict is on the side of death. It is because of this that we distinguish between *svartha* and *paramartha*, between one's own good and the supreme good, the good of the Self. God bless the fellow who first thought up the difference between *svartha* and *paramartha*. Should we not honour the mind which created the illusion of a difference where none really exists? It is wonderful how he set up this difference and taught it to people. This is like the Great Wall of China; like making a boundary of the horizon and imagining that nothing exists beyond it. The reason for all this is the absence of a life lived as *yajna*. That is why the difference between the individual and society has come about.

But in reality it is impossible to separate the individual and society. If a curtain is hung in the middle of a room to divide it into two and it is blown about by the wind, sometimes one part appears larger and sometimes the other. The size of the compartment is not fixed and permanent; it depends on the wind. The *Gita* transcends these quarrels. These quarrels are imaginary. But the *Gita* says, "Keep within the bounds of inner purity. Then no conflict will arise between the good of the individual and that of society. They will not obstruct each other." What the *Gita* specially does is to remove this difference, this conflict. Even if there is a single individual who obeys the discipline of the *Gita*, the whole country will prosper, because of that single man. A nation consists of the individuals in it. A country in which there are no such individuals, men of knowledge and disciplined conduct,—how can we call it a nation?

What is India ? India is Rabindranath, India is Gandhi, and a few other people like them The outside world conceives of India in terms of a few such individuals Take three or four names from ancient times, four or five from the Middle Ages, and seven or eight of today, add to them the Himalayas and the Ganga, and we have India. This is the definition of India The rest is only a commentary on it, an expansion of it From milk we get curds, and from curds butter-milk and butter , there is no conflict To determine the quality of the milk, we determine its butter-coefficient The worth of a society is judged by its individuals There is no conflict between the individual and society How can there be ? Even between one individual and another, there should be no conflict If one is better endowed than another, what does it matter ? No one should suffer privation, and the riches of the rich should benefit society That is enough Does it make any difference whether my money is in my left pocket or my right pocket ? After all, both are mine When someone is rich, I am rich, the nation is rich —we can establish this in practice

But we erect these walls of difference If the body and the head are separated, they would both die Therefore do not separate the individual and society The *Gita* teaches just this, how one and the same action destroys the difference between *svartha* and *paramartha*, the good of oneself and the good of the Self Between the air in this room and the unbounded atmosphere without, there is neither difference nor conflict If I imagine that there is conflict and shut the doors and windows, I shall only be suffocated to death If, assuming that there is no conflict, I throw open the room, the boundless air flows into it The moment I cut off my land and my house from those of others, that very moment I am cheated of infinite wealth If this one little house of mine is burnt down or collapses, I think that all is lost, I cry and beat

my breast But why should I do so? Why weep and lament? Why form a narrow conception at first, and then cry? When I say that this five hundred rupees is mine, I forfeit the infinite riches of Creation When I think that these two are my brothers, all my countless other brothers in the world are cut off from me We do not think of this. Look how small and narrow a man makes himself In truth, *svartha* should be *paramartha*, one's own good should be the supreme good. The *Gita* shows us such an easy and beautiful way, by which the highest co-operation and harmony can develop between the individual and society What opposition is there between the tongue and the stomach? We should give to the tongue the amount of food the stomach needs When the stomach says enough, one should stop feeding the tongue The stomach is one organ, the tongue is another I am the king of both There is perfect oneness among all these organs Where did you bring it from, this unhappy conflict? Just as between the different limbs and organs of the body there is no conflict, but only harmony and co-operation, so too between the individuals in a society. It is in order to develop this co-operation in society that the *Gita* teaches us the system of action consisting of *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, performed in purity of heart Through such action both the individual and society prosper.

The man whose life is lived as *yajna* belongs to everybody. Each child feels that his mother loves him alone In the same way, everyone feels that such a person belongs to him He is dear and acceptable to the whole world To everyone it appears that he is their life, their friend, their comrade.

"Happy is the man whom all the world loves," says Samarth Ramdas The *Gita* teaches us how to live such a life

(99) The mantra of dedication

The *Gita* says that, after making one's life a *yajna*, one should dedicate it entirely to the Lord. After one's life has

become pure service, why should one surrender it further to the Lord? We say easily enough that life should become full of service, but it is very difficult to make it so. It may be possible at last, and that to some extent, after innumerable births. Even if all actions are filled with service, made up entirely of service, even then there is no saying that they have become full of worship too. Therefore with the *mantra* of "*om tat sat*," we should surrender all action to the Lord.

It is difficult for acts of service to be full of service, unmixed with baser metal. For, even in *paramartha*, *svartha* comes in; even in serving the Supreme, selfishness comes in Absolute *paramartha* is not possible There can be no action in which there is no trace of selfishness whatever Therefore, we should wish that, day after day, more and more, disinterested and unselfish actions should take place through our hands If we wish that our service should become progressively purer, we should surrender all our actions to the Lord Jnanadev has said, "To the *bhakta*, sweet as Nectar is the Name, the *yogi* labours for the art of living" But the sweetness of the Name and the art of living are not different. There is a harmony between the sound of the Name within and the practice of the art of life without The *yogi* and the *bhakta* are both one When we surrender our action to the Lord, *svartha*, *parartha* and *paramartha*—one's own good, others' good and supreme good—all become one. "You" and "I", at first so much apart, should be made one "You" and "I" together make up "We" Now, "We" and "He" must be brought together. First I must achieve oneness with this creation, and then oneness with the Lord It is this idea that is conveyed by the *mantra*, "*om tat sat*."

The names of God are countless Vyasa has made the "*Vishnusahasranama*," "The Thousand Names of Vishnu," out of them. All the names that we can think of are His.

Whatever name springs up in our mind, let us see its meaning in Creation, and shape our life in accordance with it Seeing in Creation that name of the Lord which shines in our heart, let us fashion ourselves in its image. I call this the "*tripada gayatri*," the *mantra* with three feet. Let us take the name, "*dayamaya*," "All-Compassionate," We should walk in the light of the knowledge that he is indeed the All-Compassionate, "*rahim*." Now let us open our eyes and see in Creation this Lord, the Ocean of Compassion The Lord gives to every child a mother to serve it, and air for it to breathe Seeing this scheme of Compassion in the universe, let us fill our own lives with compassion. The *Gita* gives the name of the Lord which was most current in the age. That is, "*om tat sat*."

"*Om*" means "Yes, God exists" Even in this twentieth century God exists "*sa eva adya sa u svah*"—He alone exists today ; yesterday He alone was, and tomorrow He alone will be. He is permanent. Creation is permanent. And I have girded my loins and am ready to serve. I am the *sadhaka*, the seeker , He is the Lord ; this Creation is the offering and the means of worship. It is only when our hearts are filled with this feeling that we can say that "*om*" has entered our being He exists, I exist, and my worship too goes on—thus the feeling of "*om*" should settle in our minds and find expression in our *sadhana*, our work. Whenever we see the sun, we see it with its rays It cannot exist without them It never forgets its rays In the same way, whenever any one looks at us, we should be seen with our *sadhana*, our work. It is only then that we shall have made "*om*" our own.

Then comes "*sat*." The Lord is "*sat*," that is, He is good ; He is auspicious Be filled with this *bhavana*, this feeling, and in Creation, enjoy His benignity Look at the trough in the water ! When you fill a pitcher from the tank,

the depression is filled up in a moment How benign, how loving A river cannot tolerate emptiness It runs forward to fill it up

"*nadu vegena suddhyati*"

The river of Creation purifies itself by speed All Creation is good, is auspicious Let your action too be likewise. In order to make our own this "*sat*," this name of the Lord, all our actions should be pure and full of *bhakti* Just as the *soma* juice is filtered for the sacrifice, we too should examine all our actions and efforts constantly and make sure that they are flawless

"*Tat*" now remains "*Tat*" means "that," the other, something untouched by Creation The Supreme is different *from Creation and untouched by it As the sun rises*, the lotuses bloom, the birds begin to fly and darkness disappears. But the sun remains afar, quite aloof from the changes it brings about When we have attained detachment, when our actions are disinterested, we may take it that "*tat*" has entered into our lives

In this way the *Gita* teaches us how to take the Vedic Name "*om tat sat*" and surrender all our actions to the Lord Earlier, the Ninth Chapter spoke of surrendering all actions to the Lord This is what is said in the *sloka* "*yat karoshi yadasnaasi*"—"Whatever you do, whatever you eat." In the Seventeenth Chapter, this idea is more fully dealt with, that the action which is surrendered to the Lord should be *sattvik*, for only then will it be worthy of being offered to the Lord—this is specially stressed here.

(100) The Name of the Lord takes away sin

All this is very well. But the question now arises, "This Name, *om tat sat*, is only for the pure man. What is the sinner to do? Is there a Name which even in the mouth of a sinner is beautiful?" The Name *om tat sat* has this power too. Every one of the names of the Lord has the

power to lead us from untruth to truth. It can take us from sin towards sinlessness. We have to purify our lives little by little. The Lord will surely help. In our weakness He will support us.

If a man tells me, " On one side is a life pure but proud, and on the other, a life sinful but humble , which would you choose ? " , though my tongue may not utter it, I would still feel in my heart of hearts, " The sin which makes me think of the Lord, let that sin come to me. If a life of virtue will bring forgetfulness of the Lord, then let me rather have the life of sin that would bring me thoughts of Him." This does not mean that I plead for a life of sin. But sin is not so sinful as pride in one's virtue Tukaram says,

" All this knowledge, I fear, my Lord, will only hinder me " Yes, we can do without this greatness. It is far better to be a sinner and grieve

" The child that is too clever, even the mother pushes him away."

But the ignorant child, the mother keeps in her lap. I do not want to have a virtue that is sufficient unto itself. I would rather be a sinner clinging to the Lord. The holiness of the Lord can hold all my sins and still survive. Let us try to avoid sins If we fail, our hearts will weep, our minds tremble. Then we will remember the Lord. He has been standing by, watching the fun Cry out to Him, " I am a sinner ; I have therefore come to Your door." The virtuous man has a right to think of the Lord because he is virtuous. The sinner has a right to think of the Lord because he is a sinner.

CHAPTER XVIII

CONCLUSION—THE FULFILMENT OF THE RENUNCIATION OF FRUIT—THE GRACE OF THE LORD

(101) Arjuna's last question

My brothers, now by the grace of the Lord, we have reached the Eighteenth Chapter In this world of chance and change and mutability, the fulfilment of any resolve depends on the will of the Lord And in jail, at every step, one experiences uncertainty. To start anything in jail and to expect to conclude it here is far-fetched When we started this study of the *Gita*, we did not expect that it would be possible to finish it here. But, by the will of God, we are approaching the end.

In the Fourteenth Chapter, life, that is, all our activity, was divided into three classes, *sattvik*, *rajasik*, and *tamasik*. Of the three, we learnt that we should give up the *rajasik* and *tamasik*, and take hold of the *sattvik*. Then, in the Seventeenth Chapter, the same matter was treated in a different way. *Yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, sacrifice, gifts and penance, or, in one word, *yajna*, sacrifice, is the essence of life Then, in the Seventeenth Chapter, it was suggested that actions like eating, which are ancillary to sacrifice, should be accepted only as a form of sacrifice, and only after making them *sattvik* We should accept only those actions which are *sattvik* in nature and come to us in the form of sacrifice , it is proper that we give up all other kinds of action. We have also seen why we should constantly remember the *mantra*, "*om tat sat*" "*Om*" stands for constancy, "*tat*" for detachment, and "*sat*" for the *sattvik* nature, for purity In our endeavour, there should be constancy, detachment and purity Only then can we surrender it to the Lord From all this it appears that some actions should be done and others given up.

If we look at the whole message of the *Gita*, we are taught in place after place that we should not renounce action. The *Gita* speaks of the renunciation of the fruits of action. Everywhere in the *Gita* it is taught "Go on constantly performing action, but keep renouncing the fruits of it." This is one side of it The other appears to be that we should perform some actions and renounce others Therefore, in the beginning of the Eighteenth Chapter, Arjuna asks the final question, "On the one hand, it is said that no matter what action we do, we should first renounce the fruit. It is said on the other that some actions must be perforce renounced and others are worth performing How are these two statements to be reconciled?" This question is framed so that we may understand clearly the direction in which life should proceed It seeks to understand the secret of the renunciation of fruit In what the *sastras* call "*sannyasa*" (renunciation) action should be renounced in its very form and nature That is, the form of action is itself to be renounced But in "*tyaga*," sacrifice, what is renounced is not the action, but the fruit of it Now the question is, "For the renunciation of fruit that the *Gita* enjoins, is it necessary to renounce action itself?" Tested by the touchstone of renunciation of fruit, is there any benefit to be derived from *sannyasa*, the renunciation of action? Where are the limits of *sannyasa* placed? Where and what are the limits of *phalatyaga* and *sannyasa*, renunciation of fruit and renunciation of action? This is Arjuna's question.

(102) Renunciation of fruit—the sovereign touchstone

In reply to this question, the Lord has said one thing clearly, that the touchstone of renunciation of fruit is of universal application The principle of renunciation of fruit can be applied everywhere There is no conflict between renouncing the fruit of all actions and renouncing *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions. The nature of some actions is such that,

if we apply to them the device of renouncing the fruit, they fall off of themselves Performing actions after renouncing fruit means just this, that some actions are to be given up It naturally includes the direct renunciation of these actions.

Let us consider this matter a little more deeply. When we say, "The actions that are interested, that spring from desire, do them after renouncing the fruit," we cut the ground from under their feet Faced with renunciation of fruit, actions that spring from desire and actions that are forbidden cannot stand To act with renunciation of fruit is not something merely artificial, designed, or mechanical When this test is applied it becomes clear of itself what actions should be performed, and what should not be Some people complain, "The *Gita* merely teaches us to perform actions renouncing the fruit, but it does not tell us what actions to perform" But it only appears so, it is not really so Because, once it is said, "Perform action after renouncing the fruit," it becomes clear what actions we should perform and what not Violent actions, actions filled with falsehood, actions like theft—it is quite impossible to perform them after renouncing the fruit. The moment such actions are tested on the touchstone of renunciation of fruit, they simply disappear When the light of the sun spreads, all objects begin to look bright, but does the darkness too appear bright ? No, it disappears altogether. This is the condition of forbidden and interested actions. We must test all our actions on the touchstone of renunciation of fruit. Renunciation of fruit is the test for performing any action When this test is applied, interested actions show themselves up as unworthy They are fit for *sannyasa*, fit only to be renounced What now remains is only pure *sattvik* action Such actions should be performed without egoism Renouncing interested actions is itself action. Apply the scissors of renunciation of fruit to this action too.

Then the renunciation of interested action will become natural

Thus we have seen three things. The first is that, whatever we do, we should do it after renouncing the fruit The second is that *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions—prohibited and interested actions—when tested on the touchstone of renunciation of fruit, fall off by themselves The third is that, even to the giving up of such actions, the scissors of *phala-tyaga*, renunciation of fruit, should be applied We should not give room to the egoism which says, " How much have I renounced ! "

Why should *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions be given up ? Because they are not pure. Being impure, they leave a mark on the mind of the doer But on further thought we find that even *sattvik* action has some defects Indeed in all action there is some imperfection Take even the *svadharma* of agriculture It is pure and *sattvik* But even in agriculture, which, as *svadharma*, is all *yajna*, there occurs unavoidably some *himsa*, violence So many lives are destroyed in ploughing and other operations So too when, to prevent the surroundings of a well from becoming slushy, the ground is hardened and plastered When we open the doors and windows in the morning and the sunlight enters the house, innumerable lives are destroyed What we call cleaning up turns out to be large-scale murder If even in *sattvik* action performed as one's *svadharma* there is some flaw, what then are we to do ? That is the question

I have already said that we have yet to develop to the full all the good qualities We have tasted so far only a drop of qualities like *jnana*, *bhakti*, *seva*, *ahimsa*—knowledge, devotion, service, non-violence—and so on It is not as if we really know them fully Life progresses by experience. In the Middle Ages there was a theory that, because of the violence in agriculture, a non-violent person should not take

to it. He could be a merchant Producing food was considered a sin, but not buying and selling it. But by shirking action in this way, we can do no good to ourselves. If one goes on contracting one's actions in this way, one will end by destroying oneself As man thinks of ways of freeing himself from action, action multiplies itself. In order that you may trade in grain, has not someone else to grow the grain ? Then, are you too not responsible for the violence involved in growing it ? If it is a sin to grow cotton, it is equally a sin to sell it There may be something wrong in growing cotton, but it is wrong to think of giving it up on that account To push away all actions, saying that neither this, nor that, and indeed nothing, should be done—in this attitude there is no true compassion On the other hand, this is the end of compassion When the leaves are plucked, the tree does not die , on the contrary it puts forth fresh leaves In narrowing one's action, one narrows one's soul

(103) The true way of freeing oneself from activity

Now the question is, " If there is defect in all actions, then why should we not give them all up ? " The answer to this has already been given once The concept of giving up all actions is very beautiful The thought of it fascinates one But how is one to give up these countless actions ? Will the method of giving up *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions serve for *sattvik* actions too ? How to save oneself from those *sattvik* actions that are defective ? This would be like " *sendraaya takshakaaya svaahaa*," offering an oblation " to Takshaka with Indra " The funny thing is that when a man does this, not only does Indra, the immortal, not die, but Takshaka, the mortal, escapes death and grows stronger. In *sattvik* actions there is merit, but also a little defect But if, because there is some evil mixed up with the good, you would offer up, renounce, the good along with the evil, not

only will the good, because of its strength, not perish, but evil will certainly go on increasing By this foolish kind of mixed sacrifice, the Indra of merit does not indeed perish. but the Takshaka of evil, though mortal, will escape death How then are we to renounce them ? If we drive away the cat because it is a nuisance, the nuisance of the mice will increase If we destroy the snakes because they do harm, other creatures multiply and destroy the crops and, as a result, thousands of people may die. Therefore, renunciation must be accompanied by intelligence

Machindranath told Gorakhnath, "Wash this boy and bring him back" Gorakhnath caught hold of the boy's feet, dashed his head against a stone, and spread him on a hedge to dry Machindranath asked him, "Have you brought the boy washed ?" Gorakhnath answered, "I have washed him white and put him out to dry" Is a boy washed this way ? We don't wash clothes and boys in the same way There is a lot of difference between the two So, too, there is a lot of difference between renouncing *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions and renouncing *sattvik* actions. *Sattvik* actions should be renounced in a special way

Unintelligent actions can only produce topsy-turvy results. Tukaram has said,

"Pleasure wells up within from sacrifice
What then shall I do, O Lord ?"

When we make a little sacrifice, a great joy comes and sits on our necks Thus even the little sacrifice is belied To compensate for a little sacrifice, they put up huge monuments Than these, that old hut was better It was good enough It is better to continue to keep one's coat and turban than to wear nothing but a loin-cloth and to surround oneself with wealth and pleasure Therefore the Lord has explained separately the way of renouncing *sattvik* action. All the *sattvik* actions must be done, but we should pluck

and throw away the fruit Some actions should be utterly rooted out, while of others only the fruit should be plucked and thrown away If there is a stain on the body, it can be washed off ; but if the skin itself is dark in colour, what is the good of giving it a coat of whitewash ? Let the dark colour remain Why do you pay attention to it ? Do not consider it inauspicious.

Once there was a man who, feeling that there was something inauspicious about his house, left it and went and settled in another village That in turn seemed dirty to him, and he went away to the forest There, as he sat under a mango tree, a bird's droppings fell on his head He said, "This forest too is unfriendly," and went and stood in a river. In the river, the sight of the big fish eating up the small fish filled him with disgust "The whole of creation," he concluded, "is unkind There is no way out except through death" So he came out of the water and kindled a fire Then a gentleman who was passing by said, "My brother, why are you preparing to die ?" He replied, "Because the whole world is inauspicious" The man said, "If this unclean body of yours, this mass of flesh, begins to burn, how it would stink ! I live close by Where could I go ? When a single hair burns, it smells so awful ! And now, all this flesh of yours will burn ! Just think a little of the stench you will spread" Then the man was bewildered and exclaimed, "If one can neither live in this world nor die in it, what is one to do ?"

That is to say, if we go about condemning everything as bad and inauspicious, and rejecting it, we simply cannot carry on. If you try to avoid small actions, other great big actions will come and sit on your head It is in the nature of action that we do not get rid of it by giving up its external form. If a man spends his energies on resisting the actions which come to him naturally with the current, if he swims

against the current, he will in the end succumb to weariness and be swept off by the stream He should try to cross the stream with the help of actions which flow with the current. Then, little by little, actions will cease of their own accord. Even without renunciation of action, activity will fall off. Action will not leave us, but activity will disappear.

Between action and activity there is a difference. For example, there is a big commotion somewhere, and we want to stop it A policeman shouts at the top of his voice, "SILENCE!" To put an end to the noise there, he had to perform the intense action of shouting aloud Another person comes up there and merely lifts his finger With only this, the people become quiet A third person has but to come there, and stillness descends One had to exert himself and perform an action, the action of the second was a gentle gesture; the action of the third was subtle. The activity becomes progressively less, but all three alike do the work of calming the people As inward purity grows, the effort in the action becomes less From effort to gentleness, from gentleness to subtlety, and from subtlety to nothingness Action is one thing, effort or activity is another. Action is that which is most desired by the doer—this is the definition of action. The grammarian Panini says, "*kartuh ipsitatamam karma*" That is, in a sentence, "that which the subject—the *kartaa*, (the doer)—most desires to encompass is the object—the *karma*, (the action)" Action is that which is dearest to the doer—this is the definition of action Thus, in Sanskrit *karma*, action, can be expressed by using the noun in the nominative or the accusative case; but to express *kriya*, activity, an independent verb (*kriya-pada*) is necessary.

Understand therefore the difference between *karma* and *kriya*, action and activity. One, in his anger, shouts aloud; another expresses it without opening his mouth. The *jnani*,

the seer, makes not the slightest effort, does no *kriya* ; but he performs infinite action, *karma* The mere fact of his being can confer infinite benefit on the world. His presence is enough Though his hand and feet do no work, he still works As *kriya*, activity, becomes subtler and subtler, *karma*, action, becomes greater. If we carry this stream of thought further, we can say that, when the mind and heart become absolutely pure, in the end, activity tends towards zero and action towards infinity. First effort, then gentleness, then subtlety and at last nothingness—thus, the state of inactivity is reached of its own accord. But now, infinite action takes place by itself.

By pushing away the external forms of action, we do not get rid of action This we shall experience gradually, if we go on performing action regardless of fruit. Browning has written .

" An unbelieving Pope won't do, you say.
It's like those eerie stories nurses tell,
Of how some actor played Death on a stage,
With paste-board crown, sham orb and tinselled dart,
And called himself the monarch of the world,. .
Got touched upon the sleeve familiarly
By Death himself. Thus God might touch a Pope
At unawares, ask what his baubles mean,
And whose part he presumed to play just now ? "

The Pope would say, " I play the part because it is possible that as I go on acting, as I go through the motions of the part, some day, without my even realising it, faith will move within me "

Therefore, we should go on working without thinking of the fruit Then, little by little, we shall attain the state of actionlessness

(104) Svadharma : the final analysis

That is, we should completely give up *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions and perform *sattvik* actions. While doing so, we

should retain the perception that we should not give up the *sattvik* action that comes to us in an easy and natural way, even though it has some defects. If there are defects, let them be. If you try to turn your back on them, other defects will overtake you. Let your crooked nose remain as it is. If you attempt to cut it and improve it, you will only make it more frightful. It is good enough as it is. Though defective, because they come naturally, *sattvik* actions should not be given up. They must be performed, but their fruit should be renounced.

There is one thing more to say. The actions that are not yours by nature, even if they seem to you easy to perform, do not perform them. Do only the actions that fall to you naturally. Do not run about and get caught in the whirlpool of other, new actions. The actions that have to be artificially put together, keep away from them, however good they may be. Do not be beguiled by them. It is only when an action comes to us naturally that its fruit can be renounced. If a man runs about on all sides impelled by the greed for action, imagining that this is good, and that is good, how can he ever give up the fruit? In this way, his whole life would be a failure. While thus, for love of the fruit, he desires to perform *paradharma*, the action that rightly belongs to others, he will let slip the fruit also ; he will have no steadiness in life. The attachment to action will cling to his mind. If there is greed even for *sattvik* actions, these too have to be given up. If you wish to perform such a variety of *sattvik* actions, into them too *rajas* and *tamas* will enter. Therefore perform only the *sattvik* action that falls to you naturally and easily as your *svadharma*.

Svadesi dharma, the national *dharma* ; *svajatiya dharma*, communal *dharma* ; and *svakalina dharma*, the *dharma* of the age—all these come together in *svadharma*, one's own *dharma*. These three combine to make up *svadharma*.

To determine one's *svadharma*, one should consider what is helpful and appropriate to one's nature and situation, and what duty falls to one. You have in you something unique and your own, your "you-ness," and that is why you are "you." In every individual there is something distinctively his own. The development of a goat depends on its retaining its goat-ness. It should *remain* a goat in order to grow. It is not for the goat to wish to be a cow. It is impossible for it to give up the goat-ness that has come to it through nature. It would have to give up its body, and take a new birth and a new *dharma*. But, in this birth, goat-ness is sacred to it. Don't you know the story of the ox and the frog ? There is a limit beyond which a frog cannot blow up its body. If it tried to become as big as an ox, it would only die. It is not right to copy others' forms. That is why it is said that *paradharma*, the *dharma* of others, is terrible and dangerous.

Again, in *svadharma* there are two parts. One changes, while the other does not. I am not today what I was yesterday, nor shall I be tomorrow what I am today. I am for ever changing. The *svadharma* of childhood is just to grow. In youth, I am full of the power of action, and should use it in the service of society. In maturity, others will get the benefit of my wisdom. While one part of *svadharma* is thus changing, the other part is unchanging. If we use the names of the old *sastras*, we should say, "Man has a *varna-dharma* and an *asrama-dharma*." While *varna-dharma* does not change, *asrama-dharma* is constantly changing

Asrama-dharma changes in the sense that I complete the *brahmacharya* (student) stage and enter the *grhastha* (householder) stage, and then through *vanaprastha* (retirement) to *sannyasa* (renunciation). Though the *asrama* changes in this way, there is no change in *varna-dharma*. I cannot cross the bounds set by nature. The very effort to do so is false. The "you-ness" in you, you cannot give up This is the

basis of *varna-dharma*. The idea behind *varna-dharma* is very beautiful. Is *varna-dharma* absolutely unchangeable? Is the *brahminhood* of the *brahmin*, the *kshatriyahood* of the *kshatriya*, like the goat-ness of the goat or the cow-ness of the cow? I accept that *varna-dharma* is not as inflexible as that; but we should understand its hidden meaning. When the term "*varna-dharma*" is used for a device to maintain a social order, it must necessarily admit of exceptions. We have to accept these exceptions The *Gita* too does so In other words, understanding aright both these kinds of *dharma*, we should push away from us any other *dharma*, however beautiful and alluring it may be

(105) Renunciation of fruit—its full meaning

From our development so far of the idea of the renunciation of fruit, the following principles emerge :—

(1) The complete renunciation of *rajasik* and *tamasik* actions

(2) Renouncing the fruit of this renunciation, even about this, let there be no egoism or pride

(3) Without giving up the forms of *sattvik* action, renouncing only their fruit

(4) Those *sattvik* actions which are to be performed after renouncing the fruit, even if they have imperfections, should be performed

(5) By constantly performing such *sattvik* actions with renunciation of fruit, the mind and heart get purer and purer, and thus,—from intensity to gentleness, from gentleness to subtlety, from subtlety to nothingness—activity finally ceases

(6) Activity disappears, but action—action benefiting the world—continues to take place.

(7) Even of *sattvik* actions, we should perform only those which come to us naturally We should keep aloof from those actions that do not fall to us by nature, no

matter how good they seem. We should not be deluded by them.

(8) Even the *svadharma* that comes to us naturally is of two kinds, one changing, the other permanent; *varna-dharma* does not change, but *asrama-dharma* keeps changing. The *svadharma* that ought to change, we should go on changing This will keep Nature pure. Nature should keep continuously flowing. If a stream begins to stagnate, it stinks. It is the same with *asrama-dharma*. Every man starts with his family For the sake of growth he submits himself to the bonds of family Here he acquires many kinds of experience But if, having become a family man, he gets caught in it permanently, he will be destroyed Being part of a family, which was *dharma* at first, now becomes *adharma*, for now that *dharma* has become a thing that binds him down. If, out of attachment, he does not give up this old *dharma*, then a terrible situation arises One should not have attachment even to a good thing From attachment come cruel tragedies If the germs of tuberculosis enter our lungs, unawares, they consume our whole life from within In the same way, if the germs of attachment, through our carelessness, enter our *sattvik* actions, then *svadharma* will rot from within Even in that *sattvik svadharma*, the evil odour of *rajas* and *tamas* will spread Therefore, the changing *dharma* of the family should slip off from us at the right time. The same applies to national *dharma* too. If, even in national *dharma*, out of attachment we begin to think of the good of our nation alone, this patriotism may itself be an obstacle to our development When attachment gets a footing in our hearts, our downfall begins

(106) Attainment is only the last stage of sadhana

The truth is that, if you wish to attain the goal of life, then you should seek and find the *chintamani*, the precious jewel, of renunciation of fruit. It will show you the way.

This principle of renunciation of fruit also shows us the bounds within which to act When this light is near, what we should do, what we should not do, what we should change and when, all this becomes clear of its own accord But now we shall think of something quite different Should, or should not, the seeker keep in mind the ultimate state when all activities cease ? Should the seeker keep his eyes on the state of the *jnani*, the seer, who does nothing, but through whom countless actions take place ?

No. Here too we should apply the touchstone of renunciation of fruit. The shaping of our lives is so beautiful that our needs will be met even without our looking for them The noblest fruit of life is *moksha*, freedom But even for that freedom, even for that state of inactivity, we should not be greedy. That state will come to us unawares, of its own accord *Sannyasa* is not the sort of thing that comes at five minutes past two, all of a sudden *Sannyasa* is not something mechanical We cannot even be conscious of the way in which it grows in our life Therefore, give up all thought of *moksha*, the achievement of freedom

The *bhakta*, however, keeps saying to the Lord, "It is enough for me to love you. I do not want the final fruit of *moksha*." After all, *moksha* too is a kind of enjoyment, a kind of fruit And to this fruit again we should apply the scissors of renunciation of fruit ; but this does not mean that we shall miss *moksha* The scissors will break and the fruit grow stronger Even as we give up the desire for *moksha*, we shall be moving towards it, without being aware of it We should be so absorbed in *sadhana* that we forget all about *moksha*, and then *moksha* will come seeking us and stand in front of us Let the *sadhaka* be steeped in his *sadhana*

"*maa te sango astu akarmani*"

"Do not be attached to actionlessness" In the very beginning the Lord has said, "Do not be attached to the state of actionlessness, to *moksha*"

Now, in the end, He says again,

"*aham tva sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maa suchah.*"

"I shall deliver you from all sins, do not grieve" He says, "I am the master, the giver of *moksha* Do not worry about *moksha* It is enough if you attend to your effort"

By forgetting all about *moksha*, one's efforts become more noble Then *moksha* will be enamoured of you and come to you Round the neck of the seeker who, without desire for *moksha*, is absorbed in *sadhana*, in effort, *Moksha-lakshmi*, the Goddess of Freedom, will throw the garland of victory

When we reach the ultimate bounds of *sadhana*, fulfilment stands there, waiting for us with folded hands. If a man who wants to reach home, stands under a tree in the forest, chanting "Home, Home,"—home will remain as far away from him as ever, while he will have to remain in the forest. If I think of home and take rest by the way, I shall stay far away from that ultimate place of rest I should keep steadily at the job of walking It is only then that home will, all of a sudden, come and confront me By lazily thinking of *moksha*, my effort, my *sadhana*, becomes lax, and the goal recedes Not to bother about *moksha*, but to remain absorbed in *sadhana*, is the way to attract *moksha* Do not be greedy for rest, for the state of inaction If you love *sadhana* for its own sake, *moksha* is sure to come

You will not get your answer to a problem by shouting, "Answer, Answer!" It is only by following, step by step, the appropriate method, that you will get the answer When the process is complete, the answer is found How can we reach the end before the completion of the process? How can we get the answer without the method? How can the state of realisation be reached while yet one is in the state

of seeking ? When one is struggling in the water, what is the use of dreaming of the pleasures and the safety of the other shore ? Then all one's attention should be directed, all one's energy be applied, to pushing forward, stroke by stroke. First complete the *sadhana*, the process. Cross the sea. Freedom will come of itself.

(107) The triple state of the siddha

When the *jnani*, the seer, reaches the final stage, all activities cease , they drop off But this does not mean that in this stage there will be no activity at all Actions may be done through him, or they may not This last stage is surpassingly beautiful and noble. In that state, whatever happens, there is no thought about it And whatever happens is beneficent and beautiful He now stands at the summit of *sadhana*. And although he does everything now, he does nothing. Even when he kills, he does not kill And when he does good, it is not he that does good

This final state of freedom is also the last stage of *sadhana*. The last stage of *sadhana* is reached when *sadhana* becomes natural, easy Then there is not even the thought that one is doing something In other words, I should call this the " amoral " stage of *sadhana* The stage of realisation is not a moral state The little child speaks the truth, but that does not make him moral, because he has no idea of what falsehood means To be acquainted with falsehood and yet to speak the truth, that is moral action In the state of realisation, there is no falsehood at all ; there is only truth Hence there is no question of morality There, no forbidden thing can enter , the ear cannot hear what should not be heard , the eye cannot see what should not be seen Only that which should be done will get done through the hands ; no effort is needed That which should be avoided keeps itself off , there is no need to avoid it. This is the state in which there is no morality This culmination of *sadhana*,

call it amoral or beyond morality, it is here, in this transcendence of morality, that one sees the supreme heights of morality. This phrase, "transcendence of morality", strikes me as happy. We may also call this the state of *sattvik* action which is free of *sattva*, is beyond goodness

How is one to describe this state ? Just as before an eclipse darkness fills the sky, the shadow of the *moksha* which is to come at the death of the body begins to spread even before the body falls Even while living in the body, the experience of the state of *moksha*, which is to come, begins When we try to describe this state, words fail However much violence a man in this state commits, he does nothing. By what measure can we measure his actions ? All the actions which take place through him will only be *sattvik*. Even when all activity has been exhausted, he will continue to confer blessings on the world. I do not know what language to use to describe this.

In this last state, there are three attitudes One is that of Vamadeva His famous declaration is, "All that there is in the universe, that am I" The *jnani*, the seer, becomes egoless He loses attachment to the body, he reaches the end of activity as such Now he attains a new state of being This state cannot be contained in one body. A state of being is not a state of activity It is the state in which *bhavana* is most pervasive and intense We can, in some measure, experience this state of being The mother becomes guilty because of the sin of the child She is virtuous because of his virtue, sad because of his sorrow, and happy because of his happiness This experience of identity, in the case of the mother, is limited to her child She looks upon her child's sins as her own The seer too, by the power of his *bhavana*, takes upon himself the sins of all the world.

Though he is a sinner because of the sins of the three worlds, and a saint because of the virtues of the three worlds, even

then, none of the sins and none of the virtues can touch him. In the *Rudra-Sukta*, the *rishi* says ·

"*yavaascha me tilaascha me godhuumaascha me,*"

"Give me jowar, give me sesame, give me wheat." How big must be the stomach of this *rishi*, who thus keeps demanding everything! But he who demands all this is not the six-foot body, but the Self, assuming the form of the entire universe. I call this the "*vaidika visvatmabhava,*" the Vedic identity with the universe We see in the *Vedas* the culmination of this *bhavana* Narsi Mehta, the Gujerati saint, while singing holy songs, says, "My Lord, what sin have I committed, that I should feel sleepy even while I praise your name ?" But was it Narsi Mehta that felt sleepy ? No, it was those who listened to him But Narsi Mehta asked this question identifying himself with his listeners This was the state of his being This is the state of all seers In this state, it will appear to one that all the sins and all the virtuous actions of the world take place through one And that is what the seer would say too Does not the *rishi* say, "Many things that ought not to be done, I have done, I am doing, I shall do" ? When this state of being is achieved, the soul begins to soar like a bird leaving the earth behind.

The seer has a state of activity corresponding to this state of being What would the seer do spontaneously ? Whatever he does will only be *sattvik* Though he is still held within the limits of the human frame, his whole body and all his senses have become *sattvik* , and so all his actions can only be *sattvik*. From the practical point of view, the ultimate perfection of the *sattvik* nature will be found in his actions. But looked at from the point of view of identity with the universe, it will be seen that, though the sins and the virtues of the three worlds are his, he is not touched by them, for he has taken off this close-fitting garment of the body and thrown it away It is only when we remove and cast away this transient body that the universal form comes to us

Besides a state of being and a state of action, a third state also belongs to the seer That is the state of awareness. In this state he does not bear with either sin or virtue He flings everything aside He is ready to set fire to the whole universe He is not prepared to take the responsibility for any action He cannot bear even the touch of it In the *jnani's* state of freedom, when he has reached the end of *sadhana*, these three states become possible.

How is one to attain this state of inactivity. the final state ? We have to train ourselves not to take upon our heads the responsibility for the actions we perform, the burden of doership We should keep reflecting, " I am only the occasion , I am not the doer of the deed " We should, with humility, take up the stand that we are not the doer of action. But it cannot be said that with this alone all sense of doership will leave us Little by little, this *bhavana* will grow First let us feel—" I am nothing , I am a toy in His hands, a puppet that He sets dancing " Then let us try to feel that whatever gets done is born of the body. I have no contact with it. All these activities belong to this corpse. But I am no corpse. " I am not a *sava*, but *Siva*, not a corpse, but the Lord " Let us not get caught up in the body's meshes When we have done this, we shall attain the state of the *jnani* and feel that we have no connection at all with the body Now we shall experience the three states of the final stage, as described above First, the state of activity, in which pure and perfect action takes place through the *jnani* Secondly, the state of being in which, although he feels that he does all the sins and all the virtuous actions in the three worlds, none of them ever touches him And thirdly, the state of awareness in which he does not allow the slightest action to approach him He burns all action to ashes. We can describe the *jnani*, the seer, through each of these three states.

(108) Thou, Thou, Thou alone

After having said all this, the Lord tells Arjuna, "You have heard with attention all that I have been saying Now, Arjuna, consider fully, and do what you think right" Thus the Lord generously sets Arjuna free. This is the greatness of the *Gita* But once again the Lord feels pity. The freedom of will that He gave to Arjuna, he takes back again. He says, "Arjuna, give up your will, your effort, give up everything, and come and take refuge in me." Thus inducing him to find refuge in Him, the Lord takes back the freedom of will He has just given What this means is: Don't let any desire of your own arise in your heart Rest with the thought, "Not my will, but His, be done" Let us of our own free will attain the experience that we do not want this freedom of will. Let us feel, "I am not. Thou alone art. Thou art everything" The goat when alive bleats, "Me . .me . me . " that is, "I, I, I." But when it is dead and its guts are made into strings and mounted on the bow for carding cotton, then, as Dadu says, it sings, "*tuhi, tuhi, tuhi*"—"Thou, Thou, Thou alone" Now all is "Thou, Thou, Thou alone"

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agitated thoughts make it impossible for the brain to send orderly and controlled impulses to the nerves, so that contrary and uncertain messages go out over the nerve wires. The brain is in confusion because the thoughts are in confusion. Thus the nervous system tends to be in disorder. As a result one feels nervous, tense, tied-up and agitated.

Nervousness is primarily derived from the thoughts we think. Learn to think orderly, controlled, disciplined, calm thoughts and you will not be tense or agitated. In view of these facts it is more and more evident that the chief cure for the prevailing tension and agitation of this era is a return to religion.

I met a friend, a minister, whom I had not seen in several years. I had heard that he had suffered a nervous breakdown. But now he seemed robust and looked the picture of health. We sat in his library one winter day before a cheerful fire. He stretched out his long legs, leaned back in his chair and asked: "Have you ever given thought to the relationship of religion to the art of resting? Our religion," he continued, "has been so concerned with morals and ethics, both matters of the greatest importance, that many have failed to realise the tonic effect of faith. Why," he exclaimed, "it is amazing what religion can do to cure tension, heal worried and anxious thoughts, and give strength for the stresses and strains so prevalent to-day."

"You must have found something," I prodded him.

"I surely have. A couple of years ago I had a nervous breakdown. I went to a hospital and was put through all the tests. My energy had gone. I was weak and listless. Finally the doctor in charge of my case gave me his diagnosis." (It was an experience not unlike that of my mother's previously described.)

"We have analysed your case, Reverend Doctor So and So," he said, "and we have decided that if you practised Christianity, you could get well." Astonished, my friend demanded "What do you mean?"

"I suppose you never read the New Testament," continued the doctor.

"Of course I do," protested the minister.

"Oh, I see," pursued the doctor. "You read it, but you do not believe it."

"I do believe it," shouted the minister.

"Well, then let's put it another way—and come now, admit it—you don't really practise its teaching of faith and